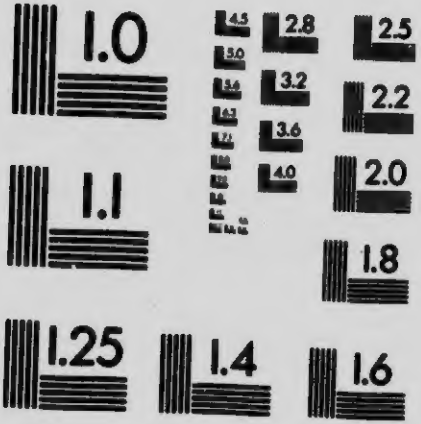
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CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT

I

CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT

"BOOTS!" he roared, for the second time. His wife, opening the kitchen door, looked in, and surveyed him.

"If I have to order you," said Mr. Baynes, speaking with great distinctness, "to come and take off my boots again, I shall dock half a crown off your weekly allowance to-morrow."

She did not answer.

"My best plan," he went on, "will be to draw it all up in black and white, so that we can have a clear and proper understandin' one with the other. We must have a proper system of fines, same as they do in every well-regulated business. Fetch the pen and ink and paper."

"How would it be to fetch it for yourself?"

He stared at her amazedly. Searching his pockets, he found there a small memorandum-book and a short piece of pencil.

"I'm going to keep calm with you," he said deliberately, "because, so far as I can see, you've taken leave, for the present, of your senses. You'll be sorry for it when you come back to 'em. Now then, let's make out a list. 'For not answering when called, one shilling.'"

He wrote this carefully on a page, regarding it with satisfaction at the finish. "See what that means? That means, for every time you pretend to be deaf when I shout at you, you'll be docked a bob at the end of the week."

"I see."

"Just as well you do," remarked Baynes threateningly. "We will now proceed to the next item: 'Food not cooked to W. B.'s satisfaction, one-and-six.' How many t's in 'satisfaction'?"

"Many as you like."

"Impudence," he continued, writing as he spoke, "one-and-three. Wait a bit; I haven't finished yet. 'Clean collar not ready when required, sixpence.'"

"There won't be anything left," mentioned his wife, "if you put many more down."

"Rests with you," giving a careless gesture. "All you've got to do is to see that none of these rules are broken. I shall take the trouble presently of copying out the list, and you'll do well to stick it up on the wall in some prominent position, so that you can

be reminded of it several times in the course of the day."

"And when any of my relatives look in they can see it too?"

"Reminds me," he said, taking his pencil again. "'Relations, two a month. All in excess of this number, fourpence per relation.' Take the list and read it out to me, and then kneel down and take off my boots as I ordered you to do some considerable time ago."

Mrs. Baynes accepted the list, inspected it; then tore the page into several pieces and threw these into the fireplace. In the pocket of an underskirt she found a purse, and from this brought four new banknotes.

"Have a good look at them, William," she said. "You won't get a chance of seeing them again. I'm just going along to the Post Office to put them away before it closes."

"How—how did you come by them?"

"I'm not bound to answer you," remarked Mrs. Baynes, "but perhaps I may as well. The money has come to me from poor Uncle Ernest, who popped off last month. He's left a sim'lar amount to my two sisters."

"You was his favourite," said Baynes, "and if he'd got money to leave—and this is the first I've heard of it—he ought to have left it all to you. I must have a glance at his will and see whether we can't dispute it."

"You'll do nothing of the kind."

"In any case," he went on, "there is, I'm bound to admit, a very decent little nest-egg for us."

"Not for us. For me," corrected Mrs. Baynes. "It belongs to me and only to me. You haven't anything to do with it."

"I've heard," he remarked, "of sudden riches affecting the brain, but this is the first time I've actually come across such an instance." He bent and started to unlace his boots. "We'll talk the matter over again later on. By the by," relacing his boots, "there's no reason why you should go out on a wet night like this and catch your death of cold. I'll trot along to the Post Office for you. I'm more used to handling money than what you are."

"That's been the case hitherto," she admitted, "but I must learn how to do it now. You stay here and enjoy your pipe, and when I come back I'll tell you how you've got to behave to me in the future."

"I suppose," he inquired with some bitterness, "I've got your precious sisters to thank for all this?"

"No," she answered, "poor Uncle Ernest."

Baynes, on the following morning, before proceeding to work, denied himself the luxury of issuing commands to his wife from the front gate in a tone of voice that could be heard by neighbours; instead he

blew a kiss in her direction and w lked off, whistling in a thoughtful way. La.er in the day he brought home the proportion of his weekly wage and placed it on the mantelpiece, announcing no deductions and giving no warning to make it last out. He tried to assist his wife in the performance of domestic duties, persisting in this until she begged him to go out into the park and give her a chance of finishing the work. On the next day he accompanied her to chapel in the evening, and borrowed threepence from her to put into the plate. Meeting two or three friends on the way back, he declined their invitations and went home with his wife, discussing the sermon and the singing. In response to her appeal he agreed to abstain on future occasions from joining in the hymns. The Sunday paper was still on the hat-stand, and on entering the house he asked whether she would mind if he had a look at it during supper, his general habit being to secure the journal and keep it for his own use throughout the day.

"This is very nice and comfortable," he said, after the meal. "Somehow, that little legacy of yours, if you'll pardon the expression, my dear, seems to me likely to prove a blessing in disguise."

"No disguise about it."

"You don't quite follow me," he remarked patiently. "What I mean is that it's going

to have bigger results than I at first anticipated. Of course, it's a pity there isn't more of it."

"Seeing that I never expected nothing——"

"Quite so, quite so. Only that the Post Office pays such a trifling rate of interest."

"The money's safe there," she interrupted, "that's the great thing."

"I should be the last to recommend anything that wasn't perfectly and absolutely sound," declared Baynes. "We're on good terms with each other now, and your interests are my interests. We two are one, so to speak. Only that, getting about as I do, I keep my ears open——"

"Listeners never hear any good of themselves."

"But sometimes they hear good about other matters. Two chaps were talking on the tramcar last week, and I was sitting just at the back. Jockeys from the look of 'em. They didn't know I was taking in all they were saying, and they talked quite freely to each other, just as I might to you in this room. Vinolia was what they were chatting about."

"Old Brown Windsor is as good as anything."

"Vinolia, it appears," he continued, "is being kept very dark, but the owner's made an arrangement, so far as I could gather, for it to win the race it's running in next

week, and no one except those that are in the stable—— Why, bless my soul, if this isn't the rummiest coincidence I ever come across in all my born days. I'm talking to you about Vinolia, and here my eye lights on the very name. Thirty-three to one. Let's see what it says about it. 'Vinolia appears to stand no earthly chance, and we are at a loss to comprehend why the owner should take the trouble to run him.'"

"What does thirty-three to one mean, William?"

"Thirty-three to one means," he explained, "that if you handed me your money and I placed it for you, and Vinolia came in first, you'd get thirty-three times the amount, together with your original money, back. But the risk is a jolly sight too great, and I recommend you, speaking as a friend, to have nothing whatever to do with it. Besides, with me, it's a matter of principle. I object to gambling *in toto*. I look on gambling as one of the curses of the country. People win money at it, and it thor'ly demoralises 'em. They bring off something successful that means they've cleared as much as they could earn by honest labour in six or seven weeks, perhaps more; consequence is that they get altogether unhinged. Upsets 'em. Knocks 'em off the main line. So my advice to you, old girl, is to put what I've been saying clean out of your head, and not

trouble any further about it. After all, supposing you had thirty-three times as much as you've got at present, it doesn't by any means follow you'd be thirty-three times as happy. That's the way you've got to look at it! "

" But supposing——"

" My dear," he said, putting down the newspaper, " we've been getting on particular well together this last forty-eight hours or so ; don't let us begin arguing and spoil it. I've been into the law of the matter, and I find I've got no right to touch your money in any way whatsoever, but it's my positive duty to see that you don't do anything silly and stupid with it."

" It's mine to do what I like with."

" Let's change the subject," urged Baynes, " and have a nice talk over old times. When do you reckon it was you first felt drawn towards me? "

Mrs. Baynes brought downstairs an hour later her Post Office book, and announced that she had been giving five minutes of serious thought to the matter. Seemed to her that here was a chance of a lifetime, and to neglect it would only mean perpetual remorse. He pointed out once more the serious risks run by those who backed horses, and submitted a large number of objections. These she brushed aside. On asking how she proposed to set about backing Vinolia,

it was admitted that here his help would be required. Baynes declared he intended to take no share or part in the undertaking.

"Very well, then," she said, "I shall have to make inquiries and see about doing it myself."

"Rather than you should be taken in by a set of rogues," he conceded, "I'll do as you wish. But, mind you, I'm acting in entire opposition to my better judgment!"

* * * * *

Baynes, back from work on the day of the race, found his wife waiting at the front gate, tapping at it impatiently; as he came within six houses of his home, he shook his head. She took up the hem of her apron, and with this to her eyes ran indoors. From the kitchen he roared a command to her to come down and leave off snivelling and make herself useful. Obtaining no reply, he took the trouble to go to the foot of the stairs and make the formal announcement that, unless she descended at once, he would break every bone in her body. She came, red-eyed, and, kneeling, unlaced his boots.

"You can't say I didn't warn you," he remarked sternly. "Every word I uttered has proved to be true. All your money gone, and your poor Uncle Ernest, if he's

looking down, or up, as the case may be, must feel sorry——"

"Don't, William, don't!"

"Oh, but I'm going to tell you the truth," he said with determination. "I'm not the man to mince my words. You get no sympathy out of me. There's only yourself to blame, and you've got to recognise the fact. I'm not going to have you going about saying that you was recommended to back the horse by other people. What you did, you did with your eyes open."

"Where did it come in?"

"Don't interrupt me," shouted Baynes, "when I'm talking! Been and lost the thread of my argument now. Besides, what does it matter where it came in? You asked me to back the horse to win; there was nothing said about backing it for a place. As I told you, I couldn't get thirty-three to one; but I did, after a lot of trouble, manage to put your money on at twenty-five. I've behaved straightforward throughout the entire business, and, now it's over, all I ask is that nothing more shall be said about it. I'm sick and tired of the whole affair. Perhaps another time you'll listen to me when I give you good advice."

"I shall never back a horse again," she declared tearfully.

"You'll never get the chance. Take the jug, and hurry off, and mind you're back here

sharp. I shall give you five minutes; if you're a second later, there'll be a fine of sixpence. That's an item to be added to the list. 'Loitering and gossiping when sent on errands, six d.' Go!" he ordered, placing his watch on the table.

He was pinning the sheet of notepaper to the wall at the side of the looking-glass when his wife returned. Glancing at the watch, he waited grimly for her explanation.

"Had to wait," she said, "and find a boy selling evening newspapers."

"And what might you want, pray, with evening newspapers? Furthermore, where's the jug?"

"If you want beer, fetch it!" she replied. "That was a good joke of yours about the horse, but you'd better not let me catch you being quite so funny again. It upset me, and I don't like being upset."

He snatched the journal from her. She compelled him to give it back and to take it properly. In the stop-press space he read out: "Vinolia, one; Gay Lothario, two; Messenger Boy, three."

Baynes stood gazing at the fire, making the clicking noises with his tongue which folk adopt when, in disconcerting circumstances, speech fails.

"I've been figuring it out in my head," she went on, "but I can't make it come twice alike. Tear down that bit of paper and sit

yourself there and reckon it up for me. Twenty-five times——"

"I can't do it. I can't do it."

"Don't you start being stupid," commanded Mrs. Baynes. "Do as I tell you."

Baynes had written the figures, and was about to enter on the task of multiplication, with one hand gripping the top of his head, when he suddenly threw away the pencil.

"My dear," he said, "I want you to be so kind as to listen to me, and I must ask you not to be madder than you can possibly help. I admit the case is somewhat trying; but you have to remember that we all have our cross to bear. I never backed that horse!"

A pause of some moments in length.

"You mean," said his wife slowly, "to look me in the face and to tell me that, after what you overheard on the tramcar——"

"I never overheard nothing of the kind on the tramcar."

"Perhaps, William, you'll kindly tell me what horse you did put the money on?"

"I never," he answered, "put no money on any horse whatsoever."

"Then where is the money?"

"In the inside pocket of the jacket I'm wearing at the present moment," he said sulkily.

"But what did you intend to do with it?"

"Hadn't quite made up my mind about

that. Idea was to prevent you from lording it over me. You see, my dear, I'd got accustomed to being master, and the sudden change was a bit trying. And in picking out what I thought was the unlikeliest gee-gee, I acted from the purest of motives, and for what I reckoned the best for all parties concerned. If I made a mistake, I'm sorry for it."

"Do you realise, William, that if you'd obeyed my orders we should have been in a position to buy a nice little house of our own here in Old Ford, and never had to pay a week's rent again? Do you understand how much you owe me? Do you comprehend——"

"My dear," he appealed, putting his hands together, "let me off as light as you can. I won't go lording it about the place any more. In future, I'll only lord it over myself."

THE TARGET

II

THE TARGET

THE woman stepped on so many toes in making her way to the far end that the passengers were only willing to give partial forgiveness when, as the motor-omnibus started, she gave a violent jerk.

"First time I've ever been in one of these new-fangled contrivances."

"It'll be the last, if you ain't careful," said the conductor, punching a penny ticket.

"But I made up my mind to do it," addressing the others. "Down in the country where I live, they've been throwing it up agenst me for some time past. And so I determined, next time I come up to see my sister, I'd take a trip by one of them, jest in order to see what happened, and—here I are."

A youth next to her, with a girl companion, mentioned that it was a pity they so often exploded, and blew up in the air; the girl jerked with her elbow and begged him not to make her laugh in public.

"You think there's any likelihood?" asked the country lady tremulously. "I don't want to get mixed up in no fatal accident, and see my name in the London papers. Shan't never hear the end of it if that happens. Do they make any warning before they go off pop?"

The passengers gave up all attempt to read, and offered her their complete attention. "So painful for friends," said a woman opposite, winking at the rest. "Understand what I mean. Having to come and sort out the bits, and say, 'That looks like Uncle James's ear; if I could only find the other one, I should be able to start piecing him together.' You see, they don't allow compensation unless you can produce the complete individual."

"That don't seem exactly fair."

"It isn't fair," agreed the humorous woman. "But there's lots of things like that here in London. For instance, if the inspector came in now, and found you sitting up in the first-class part of the car, he'd want to charge you excess."

"In that case," she said affrightedly, taking a grip of her parcel, "I'd better move down nearer towards the door."

They made room for her in the newly selected position; the folk there not disguising their satisfaction with the change. The string of the parcel came undone, and they assisted

her in recovering the contents. "Giving everybody a lot of trouble," she remarked penitently; "and that ain't my usual plan, not by no manner of means. Can I temp' you with a apple, sir? I don't know you, and I hope you'll excuse what looks like a liberty, but if you're a judge of a Ribston pippin, you'll enjoy that one."

"I recollect," said the man, "what 'appened in the Garden of Eden."

"That were before my time," she said, putting it back into her pocket. "But I always like to reward kindness wherever I come across it. And I must say you London folk are partic'lar nice to strangers. Nothing you won't do for them. When I get back home, I shall tell my neighbours how pleasant you've been to me. What's that building supposed to be, may I ask?" Pointing through the window at Bayswater Road.

"That," answered the man, "is a monument put up to Julius Cæsar. The chap, you know, who was in the Battle of Trafalgar."

"I remember. At least, I say I remember; but that's a lie. I recollect reading about it when I was at school. And isn't this a nice open part here, too! Trees, and goodness knows what all!"

"Richmon' Park," explained her informant readily. "That's the proper name of it."

"Thought that was situated a long way out."

"It's been moved."

"Ah, well," she said resignedly, "I find the best plan in London is to take everything as it comes. What I've always been hoping—— But there, it's no use talking about what isn't likely to happen." They pressed for details. "It would be too much like luck for it to occur to me. But what I've always wished for was that I might catch sight, just for once in my life, of the new King and Queen——"

Two passengers called her attention eagerly to a couple walking along by the railings, arm-in-arm; gave a fervid assurance.

"Well, well, well!" fanning herself with an ungloved hand. "To think of him strolling along with a pipe in his mouth, for all the world like an ordinary individual! And not over-dressed neither. That's something more for me to te.. 'em when I get home. Wouldn't have missed the sight for anything. But I were always under the impression that he was a gentleman with a beard."

"Shaves it off, just about this time, every year."

"I see," she remarked contentedly. "More for the sake of change, I suppose, than anything. Talking of that, I suppose there's nobody here could oblige me with silver for a sovereign?"

Out of sheer gratitude to an admirable target, they found the coins she required, and in giving her thanks she mentioned that the sooner now that she reached Notting Hill the better she would be pleased. They seemed to have a desire to conceal the truth, but the conductor happened to overhear the statement; he rang the bell sharply and informed her she was going in the wrong direction. She asked him to explain, pointing out that his conveyance certainly bore the words Notting Hill, and suggesting that he was possibly making a mistake; the delay to the motor-omnibus induced her fellow-travellers to declare that the conductor was telling the truth, and she bade them separately and collectively goodbye, expressing a hope that she might be so fortunate as to meet them again on some future visit to town.

"And which way do I go now, young man?"

"You get off the step," replied the irritated conductor. "You cross the roadway. You take a 'bus going West."

"Which do you call West?"

The motor-omnibus restarted. Passengers gazed amusedly at her, craning necks in the hope of witnessing one more diverting incident; as she vanished they became quite friendly, wondering whether she would ever reach her destination, and speaking of the simplicity and foolishness of country folk.

"What do you make of this sovereign, conductor?"

The conductor, testing it with the aid of his teeth, announced he was able to make nothing of it; he doubted whether the owner would succeed. Alarmed, the rest of the passengers searched muffs and pockets; three purses were missing, and some articles of less value. Frantic inquiries for the nearest police-station. A man who had lost nothing said he suspected the country lady all along.

"What we ought to be uncommon thankful for," said the conductor, stopping near Edgware Road, "is that she didn't pinch the blooming 'bus!"

MOVING PICTURES

III

MOVING PICTURES

"I SHOULD never have come to you," he said, making a furious dash under his signature, "only that I've been rather annoyed and upset."

"She was clearly in the wrong, I suppose?"

"Absolutely!" he declared, with emphasis. "It's made me feel that I want to get away for a time from everything and everybody. And yours is the only establishment of its kind. Cheque's all right, I hope?"

"I hope so, too," said the voice. And called out, "Pass one!" A curtain pulled aside and the young man, his chin out determinedly, moved. "Take the four slips, please. You'll have to fill them in."

A reading candlestick with a reflector stood in the corner of the dark room, which had a faint scent of burnt hay, and he went across to it carefully, but not so carefully as to escape collision, in which a hassock ap-

peared to be the less injured party. An extended easy-chair permitted itself to be seen within reach of the shaded light, and he sat upon this and read the instructions printed at the head of slip Number One. "Please Write Distinctly" prefaced the three or four precise and dogmatically worded rules. He took a pencil, wrote out his desire, and settled back in the long chair. A hand presented to him a pipe that looked a ruler, and he took two short whiffs.

His feeling of accumulated annoyance vanished on realising the instant result. Here he was, in the very centre of the old-fashioned winter he had ordered, stamping up and down in the snow that powdered the court-yard; through the archway he identified the main thoroughfare as Holborn. A cheerful cloud and an agreeable scent of coffee came from the doorway, and through the doorway came also at intervals apprehensive travellers, who gave a look of relief on discovering that the stage coach had not set off without them. Ostlers brought sturdy horses from the stables, horses that seemed anxious to do right, but somehow failed at every point to conciliate the men, who on their side did not attempt to hide opinions. The youth advanced across the cobble-stones and inquired at what hour the stage coach was supposed to start; the ostler gave an answer

almost identical in terms with the fierce denunciation used to the animals. The coarseness staggered him until he remembered the year, and the absence of education in the lives of the class to which the ostler belonged. He turned to speak to the driver.

"Not what I call cold," answered the driver, snatching a piece of straw from a truss and starting to chew it. "Remember January in '27?"

"Can't say I do."

"That was a teaser," said the coachman. He gave four slaps to each shoulder. "Snowed up jest afore we got to Reading. No chance of escape. Not a bit of food after the third day. Fortunately, the guard was a plumpish man; Tom Bates his name was; the chap who's with us to-day is thin, I'm sorry to say. Bates's widow took it very well, considerin' how onreasonable some women are. Course, the passengers made a collection for her. Tottled up poor Tom, they did, and paid for him at the rate of eightpence a pound. As she very properly remarked, it isn't every widow that can say of her late husband that he was worth his weight in copper."

The young man offered his cigar-case, and the driver, with a dexterous scoop, took the whole of the contents and dropped them into one of his enormous pockets.

"It's the outside passengers that suffer

most," the driver went on. "You recollect that case of a gen'leman on the box-seat a year ago this very day? Don't say you never 'eerd tell of him! He belonged to a banking firm in Lombard Street, and he started, just as you might, from this very spot, cheerful and warm and as pleased with himself as anybody could wish to be. Talked a bit at first, but before we were ten miles out he had left off, and when we got twenty miles out I gave him a jerk with the butt end of my whip like this, and—— What do you think?"

"I should imagine that he resented the impertinence."

"He might have done all that you say," remarked the driver, slapping one of the horses, "only he was froze. Froze stiff."

"Bless my soul!" cried the young man. "What a shocking end!"

"That wasn't the end, bless you. Tried all we knew to bring back his circulation, but nothing seemed any use, and it wasn't until we got to a oast-house and got the hop-driers to put him in the oven——"

"Hops in December?"

"It was a late year," said the driver calmly. "Everything were behindhand. But what I was going to say was this. You've got a box-seat. There's a gen'leman in there drinking his second cup, with something in

it, and he's a good-natured chap, and he's willing to change his inside seat for yours. Say the word, and it's done! "

The youth congratulated himself upon his acuteness in seeing through the device, but later, when he ducked his head on the stage coach going through the archway and adjusting his muffler, made a polite reference to the weather and its possibilities, the driver, who was smoking one of the cigars, responded only with a grunt. He tried again as they took a corner rather narrowly, and this time the driver made no response of any kind. Later, when a hackney coach called out something derisive, he ventured to suggest a retort, and then the driver hinted plainly that he was not in the mood for conversation, that if he should change his views he would make intimation of the circumstance ; in the meantime the young man had better talk quietly to himself, or address his remarks to one of the other passengers. The youth, giving up with regret the impression that all stage-coach drivers were communicative, cheery, and dispensers of merry anecdotes, turned to a fellow-traveller seated behind.

" Seasonable weather."

" What you say ? "

" I said," mentioned the young man deferentially, " it was seasonable weather."

" When ? " asked the passenger behind.

" Now. At the present time. I mean that,

whether you agree with me or not, the weather to-day is weather that——"

"Do you know what you do mean?"

"I know what I'm driving at," he asserted, becoming somewhat nettled; "but apparently I don't make sufficient allowance for lack of intelligence on your part."

"If it didn't mean taking my hands out of my pocket," said the passenger behind, "I'd knock your head clean off your shoulders. That's what I'd do to you. Clean off your shoulders!"

They pulled up at a roadside inn, and the young man, thoughtful and slightly moody after these rebuffs, brightened as he swung himself down with assistance from the axle and, stamping to and fro, endeavoured to restore circulation. Two ladies, one old and one young, stepped from the interior of the coach and looked around distractedly. He went forward and asked whether he could be of any service.

"Lunch?" he echoed. "Why, of course! I declare I had nearly forgotten lunch. Pray follow me. The others have preceded us, but doubtless——"

"We are greatly indebted to you, sir," declared the elder lady. "My niece is unused to any but the most delicate refinements of life, and it is on her account rather than my own that I ventured to appeal to you."

"I could wish for no greater honour," he

said, bowing, "than to render assistance to beauty." The girl blushed, and looked very properly at the ground.

"We had a most objectionable travelling companion, so different from the class my niece and myself mix with. Her grandfather, you will be interested, perhaps, to hear, was no less a person than——"

"Aunt, dear?"

"Yes, my love."

"Food!"

In the largest room (which seemed too small for its sudden rush of custom) male passengers were feeding themselves noisily and screaming, with mouths full, to the dazed serving-maids and to the apoplectic landlady; they gave a casual glance at the two ladies and their escort, and made no effort to give space at the one table. The young man appealed; they jerked him off impatiently. One continued an anecdote after the interruption.

"If there are any gentlemen present," said the youth, in a loud voice, "will they be so good as to note that here are two ladies, desirous of obtaining some refreshment before proceeding on the journey."

There was a pause, and the sulky passenger who had travelled in the second seat looked up from his tankard, which he had nearly finished.

"Did you say 'if'?"

"That was the first word of my remark, sir."

"Then here's my answer to you! "

The ladies shrieked and fainted. The youth, wiping from his face the contents of the sulky man's tankard, demanded whether any one possessed a brace of pistols. Willing hands pressed forward, showing an eagerness to assist that had hitherto been absent. As the serving-maids brought burnt feathers to the two lady passengers, he strode out to a snow-covered field at the back, the conductor in attendance, the rest tossing coins on the way to decide who should have the honour of supporting the sulky man. The coachman, restored to cheerfulness, paced the ground with laborious exactitude.

"Are you ready, gentlemen? Then at the word 'Three.' One, two——"

He filled in the second form, with a determination to get as far away as possible from the winter of years ago. The ruler-like pipe was again handed to him; he took this time but a single whiff, for it occurred to him that in his first experiment he had perhaps erred on the side of extravagance. There was no need to give himself a series of shocks.

The youth went down Great Portland Street in such good humour with himself that he

greatly desired to confer a benefit on somebody, to assist some one less fortunate. He looked about for an old woman selling matches, or for a boy shivering in the attempt to dispose of newspapers, and unable to find either, searched for a narrow side-street, where he might hope to have better success. Here again he received a check, for Devonshire Street and Weymouth Street and New Cavendish Street had disappeared, and in their place he found one broad, straight thoroughfare; he made inquiries and found it was called J 8 C. This he did not mind, and, indeed, it seemed an excellent arrangement when, anticipating that the next street would be J 8 D, he found this to be the case. But he still wanted to play the part of Lord Bountiful, and to satisfy his appetite for benevolence, and it pained him—although on broad grounds this should have furnished gratification—that up to the present he had discovered none who varied in apparent prosperity; not a high-level by any means, but, so far as he could perceive, an unmistakable level. Little variation existed in costume.

"I hope you will excuse me——" he began.

"What's that?"

"You must pardon me, please, for speaking, but——"

"Whom do you want?"

"I can scarcely give the name, but if you

will permit me to explain, I think I could make it clear to you, sir."

"Don't chatter," interrupted the man curtly. "And don't call me sir. You're as good as I am."

"I don't know," retorted the youth, with spirit, "why you should think it necessary to mention the fact!"

"Because you had apparently forgotten it."

"Don't go for a moment. I only wish to ask one question. Where are the poor?"

"Spell it!"

The young man complied; the other shook his head. They took to the edge of the broad pavement; the centre appeared to be rigidly reserved for those who were youthful and walked with a certain briskness, whilst either side was used by elderly folk, and by those whose movements were deliberate. The young man gave further details.

"I see what you mean now," said the other. "There was a story about a man like yourself in one of the journals the other day. He, too, had been away in a distant colony for his health."

"One of the humorous journals?"

"All of our journals are humorous. Any paragraph or column in which a pleasing strain of the ludicrous does not appear is blacked out by the censor. It isn't always very clever, but it has to be as clever as

can be reasonably expected for thirty-two and six a week."

"One pound twelve and sixpence?"

"The rate fixed by the central governing body," said the other. "Every man on leaving school receives a wage of thirty-two and six a week, and in this way all the old class distinctions have vanished, the yawning spaces between the clever and the foolish, the industrious and the indolent have been bridged. The sum was fixed—this may interest you—because it was found that a narrow majority existed of those earning less than that amount, and the injustice of the change was therefore lessened."

"Not sure that I quite follow you," he said politely, "but it's exceedingly good of you to take so much trouble. I'm not delaying you from your work?"

"So long as I do thirty hours a week, it doesn't matter when I do them."

"An ideal existence!"

"Exactly!" cried the man, with triumph. "That's what we have been aiming at! Just what we have achieved. Nothing short of perfection is good enough for us. If there's any sensible criticism you can pass upon our present conditions, we shall be ready to consider it."

"That reminds me!" he exclaimed. "I miss the poor, especially at this time of the year, when I feel generous. But of course

it's all to the good to have altered that. Only where are the children? I should like to see some children."

"You'll have to manage without them, unless you can get a special permit from the Minister of Education in Whitehall. In the old days parents were, I believe, allowed to bring up children in almost any manner they thought fit, and some of the results were exceedingly unsatisfactory. Let me see!" He considered for a few moments, detaining the other with one hand; his brow wrinkled with the effort of thought. "Pinner!" he exclaimed; "I rather think Pinner is the nearest. You'll find about five thousand youngsters in the Infant Barracks there."

"I can do with less," he remarked. "What I want is about three or four, nephews and nieces if possible; just enough to play at charades, and musical chairs, and games of some one going out of the room——" The other smiled pityingly. "Going out of the room whilst the rest think of a man alive, and then the person who has been outside comes in and puts questions, and gradually guesses who it is. Surely they still play at it."

"My dear sir, under the old scheme, a child wasted valuable years. Now we arrange that not a single opportunity shall be missed. Go to any of the barracks and you will find that every child, providing it has begun to

speak, can give quite a pretty little lecture on, say, milk, with all the latest scientific facts relating to the subject. Each youngster is made to realise the value of moments. "Time is Flying" are the words that form the only decoration on the walls of the dormitories."

"I have it!" he cried. Folk going by stopped and raised eyebrows at this outbreak of irritation; a small crowd gathered. "Now I see why you make your journals amusing. You learn nearly everything in your early days, but you omit to learn how to laugh. When you are grown up, you have to adopt the most determined means in order to——" He went on with excitement as he addressed the increasing circle around him. The frowns and the murmurs did not prevent him from speaking his mind, and he commenced to whirl his arms. "I tell you what it is. I came here expecting to find happiness. The present didn't suit me and I thought I'd try the past and the future. I declare you're worse than anything."

The crowd closed in. The man to whom he had been speaking tugged at his sleeve; he gave a sharp jerk and disengaged himself.

"And the conceit of you is the most unsatisfactory feature of the whole situation. What have you to be proud about? Here you are in the New Year, and not one of you is showing any special signs of amiability

towards his fellow-man ; you can't look back to a cosy family gathering ; you have bought no presents, and you have received none. If you knew how much you had lost, you would never rest until you had—— But I suppose you are too sensible. Ah, you don't like to be accused of that ! "

They took him at a run through the straight street that in his time had been curved and called Regent, crying as they went, " To the fountain, to the fountain ! " Almost dazed by the swiftness, and nearly choked by the grip at the back of his collar, he nevertheless recognised that their intentions were not friendly, and he endeavoured to struggle and make escape. He heard the sound of ice being smashed.

" Now then, boys. Altogether ! "

A dozen pair of hands competed for the honour of ducking him; they seized his wrists, elbows, head, ankles.

" Can't read this," said the voice. " You've written it so badly."

" Not my best penmanship," he admitted tremblingly. " What it's intended for is——" He wrote it afresh. " If I'm giving too much trouble, you can tear it up and let me go. I can easily find what I want, once I'm outside. How's the time going ? "

The smallest boy, overcoated and muffled

to the eyes, had been dispatched to meet visitors at the station, and a good deal of anxiety existed in the household when one of his sisters mentioned a grisly fear that he would talk too much on the way, betraying facts which should be hidden and guarded as secrets. His mother declared Franky had too much common sense to make a blunder of the kind, and, giving a final look-round in the dining-room, expressed a hope that there would be room for everybody. She had no doubts concerning food supplies, and, indeed, any one who peeped into the kitchen, and saw the two noble birds there, would have been reassured on this point; the cold pies formed an excellent reserve in case the birds should be reduced, by the invaders, to ruins. The young man, looking on, without being seen, noticed the eldest girl (whom he loved) standing perilously on a high chair to give a touch with duster to a frame, and nearly screamed an urgent appeal for care ; it was a relief to see her step down to the safety of the carpet. He was wondering whether he would come into the pleasant household, and found some encouragement in the circumstance that she took a particular interest in her reflection in the mirror; left alone for a moment, she selected his card from the rest which crowded the mantelpiece and kissed it. She also peeped behind the screen, and counted the crackers there ; when her mother called,

requesting to be done up at the back, she went immediately. A dear girl; he could scarce remember why or how he had found an excuse for quarrelling.

Voices of youngsters outside the front door, and the small brother rattling at the letter-box in his impatience. One of the two maids, answering, found herself as nearly as possible bowled over in the narrow hall, saving herself by clutching at a peg of the hat-stand and allowing the inrush to sweep by and through to the drawing-room. All the children loaded with parcels, which they dropped on the way, and all shouting: "Many happy returns, many happy returns!" and demanding the immediate production of an aunt, and several cousins, paying no regard whatever to the reminders from elders that they had formally promised to behave like little ladies and gentlemen.

The hostess came down in a stately way, pretending to be unaware of the fact that she was wearing a new dress. The visitors had experienced some amazing adventures on the journey, and they told them in chorus, with many interruptions, given in solo form and made up of urgent amendments concerning unimportant details. Such funny people they had met in the train, to be sure; somehow at this time of the year one always encountered the most extraordinary folk. And just as they

started, who should come rushing along the platform, just too late to catch the train, but Mr.——

"Oh, here you are!" turning to the eldest girl, who had entered the room, to be instantly surrounded and tugged in every direction by the youngsters. "We were just telling your mother that your friend—— Oh, look at her blushing!"

"We'll put dinner back twenty minutes," said the mother, interposing on her daughter's behalf. "That will give him time if he catches the next."

"Perhaps he never meant to come by that train," said Uncle Henry. "Very likely he's gone off somewhere else. One can never depend on these bachelors."

"Tease away," said the girl courageously. "To tell you the truth, I rather like it."

"In that case," remarked the uncle, "I decline to proceed. If I can't give annoyance, I shall simply shut up. Supposing I have a kiss instead."

Tragic moments for the children who were being released from the control of neck-wraps and safety-pins and rubber shoes, for, apart from the tantalising scent of cooking, they had to endure the trial of saying nothing about the parcels brought. They clustered around the eldest girl, knowing this to be the surest quarter for entertainment, and she would have found a dozen arms few

enough for the embraces they required; some of their questions she answered as though her mind were absent, and she glanced now and again, when everybody was talking, at the clock on the mantelpiece. A sharp knock at the front door made smiles come again to her features; the mother gave a warning word to the kitchen and met the young man in the hall, where the boys were helping him in the task of disengaging himself from his overcoat by pulling at it in all directions. He could not express his regrets at the missing of the train, but every one knew what motor-omnibuses were, and as he shook hands formally with the eldest girl (who appeared rather surprised, remarking to him, "Oh, is that you?") an aunt began a moving anecdote concerning one of these conveyances which she had boarded on a recent afternoon opposite St. Martin's Church. She asked the conductor as distinctly as she could speak whether it went to the Adelaide, and she felt certain that he replied, "Yes, lady," but, happening to glance out later, found herself whirling along Marylebone Road, whereupon she, with great presence of mind, took her umbrella, prodded the conductor in the small of his back——

"If you please, 'm, dinner is served!"

There were chairs at the long table that had the shy appearance of having been borrowed from the bedroom, but only one

of the children made a remark concerning this, and she found herself told that another word from her would result in a lonely return to home forthwith. They all declared they had plenty of room, and Uncle Henry accepted with modesty a position near to the birds with the comment that he could always manage to eat a couple; perhaps the others would not mind looking on whilst he enjoyed the pleasures of the table; the children, now accustomed to Uncle Henry's humour, declined to be appalled by this threat, and, indeed, challenged him, offering the prize of one penny if he should consume the contents of the dishes, bones and all. They stopped their ears whilst he sharpened the big knife, and when he said, "Now, has any one got any preference?" the grown-ups gave a fine lesson in behaviour by declaring that they would be content with whatever portions were sent down to them. The maid, waiting at table, exhibited evidence of mental aberration over the task of handing plates in the right order of precedence, but wireless telegraphy from her mistress, and from the eldest daughter, gave instructions and averted disaster.

"Do look after yourself, Uncle Henry!"

Uncle Henry asserted that, but for this reminder, he would have neglected to fill his own plate, and one of the children, unable to reconcile the extreme selfishness hinted at

in an earlier stage with the astonishing effacement now proclaimed, stared at him open-mouthed. The same child later on, after expressing loudly his determination not to be frightened when the plum-pudding—over a month old and the last of its race—was brought, surrounded by a purple blaze, found performance a harder task than that of hypothetical daring, and, burying his little head in the lap of the eldest daughter, gave way to tears, declining to resume the appearance of serenity until the flames had been blown out; he regained complete self-possession on finding in the portion served out to him a bright silver sixpence, and announced his intention of purchasing with that sum Drury Lane Theatre, together with the pantomime for the current year. The elder children listened with tolerance and gave a nod to the grown-ups, showing that they knew the sum would be altogether insufficient.

"Well," said Uncle Henry, after he had resolutely turned his head away from the offer of a second meringue, "if I never have a worse dinner, I shan't complain."

"Beautifully cooked," agreed the young man.

"Credit to whom credit is due," asserted the hostess generously. "If Mary there hadn't superintended——"

"Mother, dear! " protested the eldest girl.

Great jokes in trying to induce the ladies

to smoke, but the men were left alone together with the eldest son of the family, who had not yet taken to cigarettes and was strongly recommended by the others never to begin. The eldest son found his views on tobacco, on the work of borough councils, on parliamentary procedure, and other topics, listened to with great deference by the young man visitor, who declared there was a great deal in the opinions held by the son of the family with which he felt able to agree. Nevertheless, it was he who first suggested that they should rejoin the company of the ladies.

He came out wonderfully so soon as games were started, but it appeared he could do little without the assistance of the eldest daughter. Together, they gave an exhibition of thought-reading, and, after whispered consultation, he, being out of the room whilst the children selected four figures, came in when called, and standing at the doorway whilst she appealed for order, gave the exact figures. Even Uncle Henry had to admit himself flabbergasted.

"Do tell us how it's done?"

"Please!"

"Don't believe you know yourselves!"

They declared it a secret which could not be lightly shared, but in giving way to the general appeal, explained that if the first figure was (say) one, then she had used a

sentence beginning with the first letter of the alphabet, such as:

"All quiet, please!"

If the next was two, she said:

"Be quiet, please!"

If the next was three:

"Can't you be quiet!"

And so on. Parcels came in now and strings were cut, and presents given to the owner of the day. She thanked him very prettily for the brooch and pinned it at once near to her neck; he followed her out of the room to help in carrying the brown paper and to tell her that, when his birthday came, she could reciprocate by offering him the precious gift of herself. The quarrel had been all his fault. He was bending down to touch her lips when——

"No, thank you," he said, tearing up the fourth slip. "The present time is good enough for me. Is this the way out?"

"Interesting to observe," remarked the voice, as the curtain went back and showed the exit, "that our clients, however dissatisfied they may be in entering, are always perfectly content when they depart!"

COUNTRY CONFEDERATES

IV

COUNTRY CONFEDERATES

"LET me get this yer all down on paper," said George Hunt, searching his pockets. "I find if I trust to my memory everything goes clean out of my 'ead. Been like that since I was a boy."

The man from London with the empty kit bag remarked that George was scarcely an octogenarian.

"I believe in eating roast meat if I can get it," admitted the lad. "Never been what you London people call a crank. Spite of which, somehow or other, I don't seem to make what you may call progress, and that's the truth, Mr. Polsworthy."

"How do you know that is my name?"

"I don't," he admitted. "All I know is that that's the name you've give up at the 'Unicorn' where you be staying. Here's something I can write on. 'Advice to Intending Emigrants.' I've got no special use for that. Now then, sir, let's have it all over again."

"I want you," said the London man, drawing him away to a sheeted truck, and speaking with great distinctness, "to take a message for me up to the Vicarage."

"Here's a question I've very often considered to myself," said George, stopping with the paper flat against the truck. "Is there a 'k' in it, or isn't there a 'k' in it, or doesn't it matter whether you put one or not?"

"And see Miss Thirkell, and tell her——"

"She's the one with the reddish hair, isn't she?"

"She's the one with black hair."

"Not fur out," remarked George, complacently. "Go on, sir." He continued to write laboriously.

"Tell her that some one from town wishes to see her on important business, and will she be at the station here at half-past eight this evening."

"But they've got their party on. 'Sides which——"

"Nothing could be better."

"'Sides which there's no train about that time."

"I don't want her to go by train," shouted the other in an irritable way. "I only want to have a talk."

"Excuse me asking, sir, but is it love?"

"You've guessed it!"

"A wonderful thing, once it catches you.

I never been mixed up in it to any considerable extent, but I keep my eyes open, and I noticed that once parties get affected by it, why there's no telling."

"That," said the other, "is the case with me. It's all on her account that I have come down here for a week, and I find it impossible for me to go back until I have seen her. Just a few whispered words of affection with her and October to me will seem like June."

"Can't promise to repeat all you say word for word," mentioned George, "but I'll give her the general bearing of your remarks. I shall say that you're over head and ears."

"I believe," said Mr. Polsworthy, with something like enthusiasm, "I shall have to give you a present. You're an honest, worthy fellow, and the most intelligent young man in the whole village."

"I've said that to myself," declared George, "frequent." He folded the document. "About what time, sir, did you think of getting me to do this little job for you?"

When the Londoner had finished an address on the slothfulness of country life, he permitted himself to announce, more calmly, that he expected it to be performed now and at once. The young railway porter went across the station-yard, spoke a word to the signalman on duty, and started off up the hill at a pace that seemed too good to last. He did, indeed, return to say that if later Mr.

Polsworthy observed he was wearing a white flower in his jacket, this might be taken as a hint that Miss Thirkell was willing to keep the appointment; if the flower was red, it would indicate she was unable to come. Mr. Polsworthy went to his hotel, where, with the aid of scented soap, he put good sharp points to his moustache, and ordered, seemingly to give opportunity for range and ability in criticism, certain refreshment; the landlady said that his complaint was the first she had received since the year '92, and strongly recommended him to take his bag to the "King's Head," which possessed but a limited licence. Mr. Polsworthy, in apologising, remarked that he was one accustomed to the very best of everything, and the lady expressed an opinion that his looks and general appearance failed to bear out this assertion.

George Hunt, sweeping the platform, was wearing a red flower, and Mr. Polsworthy turned away regretfully, to consider some new mode of approaching the vicarage lady. A whistle recalled him, and George managed to make it clear that everything was right; he had placed the wrong flower in his jacket—a mistake, he said, that might have happened to anybody. George seemed highly interested now in the scheme, and produced a beard with wires to go over each ear; challenged, he confessed that he was not prepared to say to what use it should be put, or to declare that

it was of any use, but it had been in his possession for some time, and he felt that either he or Mr. Polsworthy ought to wear it.

"By that means," he urged, "recognition, if you understand what I mean, will be avoided."

"But who is there to recognise us, and what does it matter if we are recognised?"

"There is that," conceded George.

"You're a fool," declared Mr. Polsworthy.

"Not the first to pass that remark to me, not by a long chalk, you ain't. Mother says it 'bout once a day."

Miss Thirkell came up the slope of the platform, and George went back discreetly to his work with the broom, touching his cap to the young woman as she went by. She acknowledged the salutation distantly, saying, "Good evening, my man!" and gave a start of amazement on Mr. Polsworthy lifting his hat and throwing away his cigar. She said that he had the advantage over her and he expressed regret that her memory should constitute the one defect in an otherwise perfect and beautiful nature. Was it, asked Miss Thirkell, was it in Dover Street, the tenth of July of the current year, on the occasion of coming out of a dressmaker's with her mistress? That, answered Mr. Polsworthy, was the very moment, and the precise occasion. Miss Thirkell considered this curious and interesting, since she was not in town on

the date mentioned, and had never been in Dover Street.

Mr. Polsworthy, slightly taken aback, begged of her to refresh a brain that could never be relied upon implicitly; she admitted that they had met once. Miss Thirkell remembered the day well, because her master took the opportunity to make some extensive purchases at a sale in King Street, St. James's, and the articles had crowded the compartment on the way down.

"A race special came in," said Mr. Polsworthy, corroborating, "just before your train went out from Victoria, and whilst your people were having a few words with the guard I strolled across to see what was the matter."

"Now," cried Miss Thirkell, delightedly, "now I know you're telling the truth!"

Her mistress, it appeared, was one who did not mind the expenditure of money in useful things, such as dress and hats, but entertained a strong objection to lumbering the house with a lot of old silver and other articles, neither, in her opinion, useful or decorative. Mr. Polsworthy expressed the view that in married life certain concessions had to be made; he had not hitherto considered the possibility of entering the state, but he was prepared to be generous in the direction referred to. George Hunt, each time they went by, looked up and nodded and made some reference to the weather; there was

more rain about, in his opinion; what we wanted was sunshine, so that cricket bats might be once more used. The two, interested in their own conversation, scarcely gave notice to his meteorological comments.

"When can I come up and see you?" asked Mr. Polsworthy. "I'm only down here for a little while."

"What seems so wonderful," sighed Miss Thirkell, dreamily, "is that you should have come specially to meet me."

"To do that I would travel to the furthermost ends of the earth." He took her hand.

"Axcuse me interrupting," said George, suddenly, "but in which direction do you reckon Canada is? You're better acquainted with geography than what I am. S'posin' now, you was going to walk there; which turning would you take?"

Miss Thirkell cried alarmingly that she had to be getting home; she had no idea the hour was so late. On Mr. Polsworthy offering to accompany her, she gave a short sharp scream and declared this impossible; he, a Londoner, little knew the appetite for scandal that existed in country villages. George, corroborating, said that if, for instance, he himself were observed escorting Miss Thirkell across the line, there were busybodies about who would assert they were as good as engaged. The visitor seemed inclined to snap fingers at public opinion, and dare it to do its

worst; the young woman said this was all very well for him, but not nearly good enough for her; she had no wish to lose an excellent situation.

"Character's everything in these parts," confirmed George. "Up in London it probably don't matter, but here it's important. When I leave the line——"

"Will to-night at ten be a suitable time for me to call at the house to see you?"

"My dear, good man," cried Miss Thirkell, "you must be off your head to think of carrying on like that! Why, the dog would make short work of any one who wasn't in uniform. Besides, the butler has to go down to the gate and let in everybody that comes to the party. Now I must run. You send a message through George Hunt. He's reliable. We were boy and girl together."

With a wave of the hand she went. Mr. Polsworthy looked steadily at George for some moments.

"You're a dull dog," he said, slowly, "and that's the only thing which makes me inclined to trust you. If you were a sharp lad, the idea would never come into my head."

"I'm all for straightforwardness myself."

"There is no use," said the other, with a burst of recklessness, "no sense whatever in disguising the fact that I'm madly in love with that girl. And when a man's in love, there's nothing he's not prepared to do. In some

way I must manage to gain admission to that house this evening."

"And in some way, you'll have to manage to get out of it."

"An easy matter."

George looked in at the booking-hall to make sure that no passengers were about.

"You're not the first, mister, that's tried it on," he remarked in an undertone.

"What's that? I'm the last man in the world to do anything dishonest!"

"If you are," said George, evenly, "that means Wormwood Scrubbs will have to be took over by the White City. In any case, your best plan is to treat me fairly, and treat me generously, and I'll do what I can, so long as my name's not brought into it. My name must be kept out, on account of mother."

Mr. Polsworthy declared his satisfaction, and hinted at surprise, on finding that George possessed so much acuteness. He did, in a general way, prefer to work alone, but sometimes cases were encountered—here was one—where assistance was indispensable. The great thing was to have a quiet half-hour inside the vicarage, and to catch the 10.23 p.m. for town. George nodded, and made one or two suggestions. Recommended a sailor's bag; there were two in the cloak-room at the present time left by men home on furlough; one could be emptied. Mr. Polsworthy, having inspected these, made his

selection and, arranging concerning the loan of an old uniform, shook hands. The kit-bag was presented to George, who said he might be able to make use of it.

"All I can say is," remarked the man from London, "that I'm very much obliged to you. You shan't be the loser."

"Question is," said George, "how much be I going to gain? I ain't what you'd call mercenary, but I like to make a bit of money as well as anybody."

Mr. Polsworthy seemed hurt by this view of the matter, and taking half a sovereign from his pocket, placed it in the other's hand; George said he could go on. Polsworthy went on to the extent of four pounds and then stopped, declaring irascibly that rather than go beyond this amount he would take the entire sum back; George pointed out difficulties, one of which included a reference to Police-Constable Saxby. The amount reached five pounds, and the two again shook hands; the heartiness was this time on the side of George.

"If you have a chance of seeing her," said Polsworthy, "keep up the idea that it's simply and solely a love affair. It'll make a good excuse in case I happen to be interrupted at my work. Mention that I seem to be able to talk of nothing else but her!"

"And that you worship the very ground she walks on."

"Don't overdo it. You can say it's all because of love that I'm going to dress up and come and see her. Say that from what you know of me I'm as true as gold."

"As true as five pound."

"For Heaven's sake," urged Polsworthy, with some temper, "do try to avoid making a muddle. If the business goes wrong, I'll dog your footsteps to the very last day of your life. If I get into trouble I shan't be alone. Make no mistake about that. Where's that slip of paper that you wrote down the particulars on?" It was produced, and the man from London, with a snatch, secured it. "Now," he remarked, "now, I've got documentary evidence that you're concerned in this game."

"My mother won't like me none the better for this," said George, dismally. "But I'll go up to the vicarage again, and give the young party your message."

Polsworthy, in a uniform that had seen trouble, staggered into the station-yard at ten o'clock that night and was stopped at the gates by P.C. Saxby. The constable apologised for the act on seeing brass buttons, accepted the explanation that the other was an extra hand, and offered to give help with the sailor's bag, but Polsworthy said that having managed so far alone, he would complete the job. In the dimly lighted booking-hall he set his load down with relief, and

went to the porters' room, where he changed into his own clothes. Ordered George to label the sack for London Bridge and, treating him as a stranger, gave him twopence for his service. The window of the office opened and he took his ticket from the station-master and strolled across the line in order to be out of the way should disaster arrive prematurely.

Nothing amiss happened, and when the train arrived, he climbed into an empty compartment on the off side, and ventured to glance out of the window to see George hurling a well-loaded sack into the front break van. They exchanged a congratulatory wave of the hand as the train went out, and George wished him, with great heartiness, good luck, and a pleasant journey.

Half an hour later George was ringing at the door of the vicarage, and playing with the watch-dog, who had followed him up the avenue, showing some inquisitiveness in regard to the load which George was carrying. Lights appeared; a head looked out of a window; in five minutes he was being received in the hall by the entire strength of the company in varied stages of *deshabille*. The restored articles of silver were taken out of the bag.

"A good deed," announced the elderly vicar, addressing the audience, "deserves an

appropriate and immediate reward. My dear, run upstairs for my pocket-book."

"Thirkell," said his wife, "run upstairs for your master's pocket-book."

"That's right," remarked the vicar, on the return of the lady's-maid. "Two five-pound notes; here we are. George Hunt, I have much pleasure in presenting you with this acknowledgment of worthy services. My dear, give him some bread and cheese and beer, and say good-night and thank him."

"Thirkell," ordered his wife, "give him some bread and cheese and beer, and say good-night, and thank him."

Miss Thirkell, in dressing-gown later at the side door, promised to be at the station in the morning in time for the first up train, and declared George had managed nicely from the start. She thought it a pity there was no chance of sending a letter to her married sister in Canada to let her know they were coming, but George said he could afford to despatch a telegram.

"And that reminds me," he added. "I s'pose I shall have to leave ha'f a sovereign to pay for the other sailor's bag what's gone off with that London gentleman. I don't want mother later on to get the idea that I haven't behaved fair and perfectly above-board!"

SURROUNDINGS

V

SURROUNDINGS

"COME on in!" he cried sportively at the window of the compartment. "Plenty of room. Reserved for gentlemen. The more the merrier!"

They pushed him aside in a way that showed the determined excursionist, and the youth placed his bag on the rack and arranged more neatly his rug and selection of cheap weekly journals. The others, choosing seats, said he could now put his head out again, and in this way frighten off other passengers. Twice, before the train started, he found himself afflicted by a short, sharp cough when girls went by in couples, and as they looked around he lifted his cap, glancing over his shoulder to see whether the humour was recognised and appreciated by fellow-travellers.

He asked numerous questions of the harried porters, shouted "Move yourself!" to folk who ran up at the last moment, gave a loud

whistle to the guard and waved his arm. The staff on the platform showed indications of relief as the train took him away ; he begged them to cheer up, promising to be back in London in ten days' time.

"When I go off for my holiday in the country," he remarked, going back into his corner and placing one heel on the cushion opposite, "I always reckon to begin enjoying myself from the very start. Lose no time, is my motto. Anybody object to smoking?"

A middle-aged man answered that he did not exactly object, but he thought people who wanted to smoke might as well travel in a smoking-carriage. Had no desire to make any unpleasantness, but that was his view.

"My dear old University chum," cried the youth, striking a match, "I can see what's the matter with you. You've had a row with the missus. She's been giving you a bit of her mind this morning. She's been offering a few 'ome truths, and some of 'em still rankle. Now what you've got to do is to imitate me."

"Heaven forbid!"

"You've got to throw off dull care and be merry and bright. Give us a yarn."

"You give us," retorted the middle-aged man, testily, "a little peace and quietness."

"Then let's have a riddle."

"I'll riddle you," threatened the man, "if

you can't leave off badgering. Talk to one of the others. I'm tired of you."

"He loves me, he loves me not." Counting the ends of the window strap and throwing them away when the last gave a negative reply. "All my old friends seem to be deserting me since I come into a bit of money. Does any one want to borrow a five-pound note? Don't all speak at once!"

The compartment seemed disinclined to talk; willing, indeed, to allow him to monopolise the conversation. He increased his efforts, and presently an anecdote told concerning a lady of his acquaintance goaded one into making the statement that the joke had appeared in print over and over again.

"Very well," said the young blade, "then let somebody else have a go." Somebody else did now accept the invitation, and ere the train was free of the last streets of town conversation became general, and he had to raise his voice in order to preserve for himself the lead.

"You can't tell me nothing I don't know about London," he shouted. "I've lived there for the last three years, and I reckon I'm more of a Londoner than any one who was born there. Look 'ere; we can soon put it to the test. How many comic songs of the present day have any of you got in your repertoire? What about you, uncle?"

"My young friend," protested the middle-aged man, "I have met, in my time, a good many bounders of all shapes and sorts and sizes, but you are the limit. Why don't you behave yourself quietly when you're in the presence of your betters?"

"I always do," he replied. "Now then, if any one can give an imitation of George Robey, let him do it; if not, I'll have a try to do the best I can. It'll shorten the journey for you."

They admitted his effort was not so bad, and two or three of his own age began to regard him enviously. Having regained command, he took care not to lose it again, and by the time the train stopped at its first junction he had secured an attentive audience; even the middle-aged man, on the train re-starting, asked how far he was going. The lad, with a glance out of the window, said he was not yet near his destination, but promised to give full warning when the time came near for them to endure the wrench of saying good-bye.

He conquered the middle-aged man, but appeared not satisfied with his victory, and, exercising the power of a tyrant, gave him a nick-name and invented a description of the domestic environments, insisting, in spite of the man's assertion that he was a bachelor, on offering a lively account of the masterful behaviour of the man's wife, her

authority over him, his servile and penitent behaviour.

"A confounded young cad!" declared the other, heatedly, "that's what you are. Most offensive specimen I ever encountered. Perfect curse to society."

"Isn't he a daisy?" asked the youth of the others. "Isn't he a arum lily? Isn't he a china ornament?"

"Leave him alone!" urged one of the others.

"Right you are," he said, amiably. "I'll give you a turn now."

The compartment was becoming restive under his sniping, when some one caught the name of a station as the train flew past, and the lad, saying, "I didn't know we were so near," rose and took his bag from the rack. Letting the window down and resting his chin there, he inhaled the country air, and announced, with a change of tone, identification of certain houses and meadows. That was the place where he once knocked up thirty-eight, after making a duck's-egg in the first innings; here was the very finest wood for nutting in the whole neighbourhood; over there, if you only went late enough and not too late, you could pick more blackberries than you cared to carry away. He begged them all to rise to catch sight of the spire of a church; they had to jump up again to see the thatched roof of a farm where lived,

he declared, three of the best cousins in the whole world. He packed his cap in the bag, put on a bowler, and threw away the end of his cigarette.

"Hope I haven't been talking too much," he said, apologetically, "and I trust no offence has been taken where none was intended. Just look at that clump of trees over there, and notice the colours they've got; aren't they simply wonderful? What were you going to say, sir?"

The middle-aged man hazarded the opinion that Nature knew something.

"Makes you realise," admitted the youth soberly, "when you get down into the country, that some one else besides man has had to do with the making of the world. If you gentlemen don't mind coming over here, you'll be able to catch a glimpse of where my mother and my sister live. There!" he cried exultantly. "You just saw it, didn't you, between the trees. Smoke coming out of the chimney. That means——" He pressed his hand against his under-lip. "That means they're preparing. You've no idea what a lot they think of me. If they're at the station, you'll have a chance of seeing them. Goodbye all. Hope you'll enjoy yourselves as much as I'm going to."

He stepped out before the train ceased to move, and looked up and down the platform

with eagerness and some anxiety. An elderly woman in black and a short girl waved excitedly to him from the inside of the doorway of the booking-office ; he ran across, and, dropping the bag, kissed them affectionately.

"You dear, dear blessing!" cried the mother.

RETIRING INSPECTOR

VI

RETIRING INSPECTOR

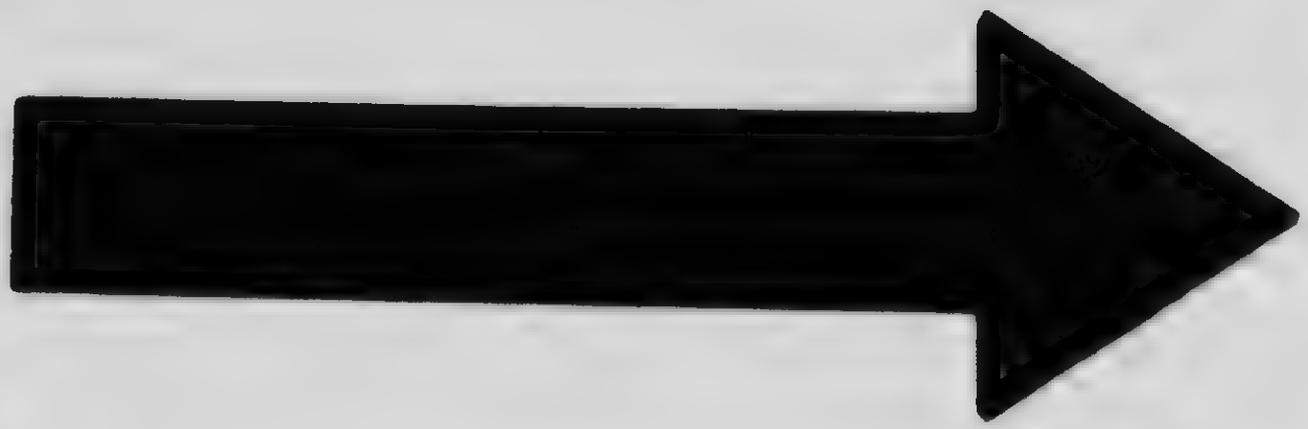
INSPECTOR RICHARDS mentioned to several of the staff that, whilst he had often taken part in the presentation of testimonials, he specially wished that no tribute of a valuable nature should be paid to him on his retirement, and the men, after private consideration, took him at his word. The night of his departure was the occasion, nevertheless, for many touching incidents. Inspector Richards made a point of shaking hands with all those inferior to him in position; a compliment they accepted shyly, after rubbing the palm down the side of trousers.

"Always been my desire," he said benevolently, "to treat every one alike, and I trust I've succeeded."

"You've done it, sir. No mistake about that."

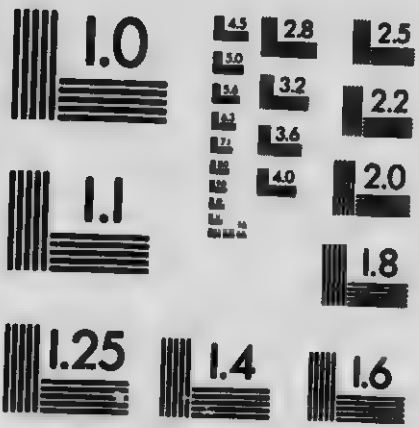
"I hope I have never shown anything in the shape of favouritism."

"There again, sir, you're right."



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"I am anxious to express the desire that nothing but what I may call kindly thoughts will be entertained concerning me when I leave the duties I have so long carried out," said Inspector Richards elaborately, "and there's no objection to you mentioning it, as freely as you like, that I shall be glad to see old friends at any hour, and any time, from half-past eight in the morning till eleven o'clock o' night at three-two-seven, Hampstead Road."

A few of the junior members were under the impression that the words suggested liberal and cheerful hospitality; those who knew Mr. Richards better warned them not to expect too much from old T. R. T. R., they said, had never yet given away a ha'porth of anything, and acquaintance with human nature induced them to believe that he, at his age, was not likely to begin. The one person who had known T. R. the longest found herself swiftly disillusioned. Harriet was to live with her father over the shop in Hampstead Road, and to keep house for him; her wedding was to take place when Mr. Richards found it possible to make other arrangements, and not until then.

"I shall look after the shop," he said commandingly. "That's my part of the work. All you've got to do is to see to the cooking, and the cleaning up, the wash-

ing on Mondays, the ironing later on, the boots, the garden at the back, and so on and so forth. You sweep out the shop first thing in the morning, but apart from that, you're not to show your face there. Understand ? "

" Yes, father."

" Don't give me the trouble of speaking twice," he went on in his official manner. " I've been used to managing much bigger affairs, without any trouble, and this will be mere child's play. I look on it more as a hobby than anything else. Worst thing that can happen to a man of my industrious nature is to have nothing to occupy his mind. Go in now, and don't you ever dare come out 'less I call you."

The shop opened promptly on the first morning, Mr. Richards wearing a silk hat as he took down the shutters, to indicate that shirt-sleeves did not mean inferiority. He nodded distantly to his neighbours, and when they asked him a question concerning the weather of the day shook his head reservedly to convey the idea that he had not yet decided the point. Inside, he arranged the cash-drawer neatly and prepared change, blew a speck of dust from the counter, and, replacing the silk hat with a grey tweed cap, lighted a pipe and waited for the rush of custom. A drawback of official life had consisted in the fact that one could

not be seen smoking within a certain distance of the terminus; it had been his duty on many occasions to reprove the staff for indulging in a pipe at the wrong moment, or at the inappropriate place; the match which he struck on the sole of his slippers made a bright flaming signal of the inauguration of liberty. During the morning Mr. Richards struck many matches and smoked several pipes, so that at one o'clock when his daughter called out respectfully, "Dinner's ready, father!" his appetite was not so good as, at this hour, it should have been.

"What sort of a morning has it been, father?" asked Harriet, with deference.

"Mind your own business," he retorted. "And pull the muslin curtain aside so that I can see when any one comes in. I've told you before the shop's nothing to do with you."

"There's a lad rapping at the counter," she remarked, disregarding his orders.

Mr. Richards upset his chair in the anxiety to attend to his first customer, and hurried in, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand.

"How do?" said the lad familiarly. "How you getting on at your new job? Settling down all right?"

"What can I do for you, Jenkinson?" Richards rested the tips of his fingers on the counter and beamed across. "Tobacco or cigarettes?"

"Last time me and you held conversation together," remarked the lad—"I'm speaking now of a matter of six weeks ago, or it might be a couple of months—you distinctly told me, as far as I remember, that smoking at my time of life was playing the deuce with my health."

"Everything's good if taken in moderation."

"And, furthermore, you said that if you caught me with a fag again, you'd report me to headquarters."

"My humour is what they call dry," urged Richards. "You have to go below the surface to see what I'm really driving at. How are they managing at the old place? What's the new inspector like? Some of you will find a difference, if I'm not greatly mistaken."

"We have!"

"Ah!"

"General opinion," said the lad, with marked emphasis, "seems to be that this one is a gentleman."

Mr. Richards eyed him across the counter; the other, almost quailing, asked whether the establishment included matches amongst its stores. A box being produced, he inquired how many it contained. Mr. Richards said he did not know. The lad, opening the box, remarked that it appeared to have been tampered with, and expressed a desire not

to be swindled. The proprietor imperatively ordered him to go out of the shop, and went back to his meal. This had become cold; the circumstance that he himself was considerably heated did not compensate.

"There's another!" mentioned Harriet.

A lamp-boy, bearing on his features evidence of occupation, wished to make an inquiry, and, accepting the reply, stayed to argue that tin-tacks were a necessity to many people at many times and should therefore be kept by those who desired to serve the public; he went on to give a brief lecture on the laws of supply and demand, and, this finished, seemed unwilling to leave without confessing something in the way of patronage, and Mr. Richards found himself called upon to give two halfpennies in exchange for a penny and to say "Thank you" to an individual whom he had not, in official days, condescended to notice.

"You must put some brains into it," counselled the boy, before going out of the doorway. "That's your only chance. Competition's very keen at the present time. And don't forget civility. Civility goes a long way with a lot of people."

"Take your hand away from that new paint! I don't want to identify customers by finger-marks."

"You won't have any if you don't treat 'em properly."

"Go back to the station," roared Mr. Richards, "and give them features of yours a good wash!"

"Used soap and water just before I came away."

"Then get them to turn the hose on you."

The boy tried to think of a retort, but none came. He made a face and went.

That evening, at half-past six, saw the real start of business. In less than five minutes the shop filled with customers, all talking loudly, all demanding to be served at once, but, in spite of this, making no attempt to leave quickly. More than once in the flurry and bustle of taking money—it was the night of pay-day, and much change therefore required—he called upstairs to inquire whether Harriet's young man had arrived; the last answer received was to the effect that the youth in question had been told not to come round that evening.

"Who told you to say that?"

"I thought it best, father."

He made an appeal to the customers for sympathy on the grounds that he had a fool for a daughter. They asked what else he had a right to expect.

It was satisfactory to see the shop crowded, but he wished the deportment had been of a more careful nature. Some called him Richards, quite shortly; a porter, for whom

it had been his painful duty to obtain three days' suspension, referred to him more familiarly; and the retired inspector found, as many have discovered, that few of us in London, however important, escape a nick-name. A few in sportive mood endeavoured to confuse him over the coins tendered, and when he had to beg one to go out and obtain some small silver for a sovereign, the messenger prolonged absence to such an extent that Mr. Richards became seriously alarmed, refusing to consider the bets offered concerning the possibility of the man never being heard of again. Temper was exhibited when the messenger returned with eighty threepenny-pieces, obtained from a friend connected with a chapel; and when it was pointed out that folk had a prejudice against accepting these, prompt answer came to the effect that in future Richards had better run errands for himself. A mouth-organ started a tune in a corner, and a porter solicited the favour of a labeller's hand for a dance.

"I'm not going to have that noise." They explained that it was not noise, but music. "Whatever it is, I'm not going to have it. Put a stop to it at once!"

"Look here, old man, you're out of uniform now. None of your gold-braid behaviour, if you please. That's gone and done with. All change is the motto."

"But," he pleaded, "I don't want to be a nuisance to my neighbours."

"You always have been."

They gave up, with reluctance, the idea of frivolous entertainment, and went on to the discussion of political matters. Richards had prided himself on the definite nature of his opinions concerning affairs of the nation, and even intimate colleagues rarely ventured to disagree; he reminded himself now that a shopkeeper had to be extremely careful to show impartiality, and to be cautious not to give offence. Consequently he found that many cherished views had to go; appealed to when the debate became warm, he said there was a good deal to be said on both sides; you found good and bad in everybody; seemed to him you might say in general of politicians that they were six of one and half-dozen of the other. In preparing to go, the customers declared they would not give a brass button for a man who was unable to make up his mind.

"Look in again soon," he said, with a determined effort at cordiality. "Come to-morrow evening, if you're doing nothing else. Always glad to see you. No friends like the old ones."

He relaxed the usual attitude towards his daughter, and said that if she felt certain hers was a case of genuine affection, and not a mere idle fancy, he had no objection

to the young man looking in any evening, every evening in fact, at about half-past six. Harriet promised to convey the permission, although she could not be sure that Arthur would take advantage of it.

"Tell him he can stay on to supper," recommended her father.

"That might influence him," admitted Harriet. "Would you like me to give a hand with the shop when you're so busy as you were to-night?"

"How many more times am I to tell you that I can manage the business myself? Besides, I don't want a set of young men coming in just for the sake of chatting and talking with you. What do you think your poor mother would have said to such an idea?"

The young man on arriving the next night found a hearty hand-shake awaiting him, and an American cigarette. He was ordered to sit inside the counter and to have a good look around. Mr. Richards gave something like a lesson in geography, pointing out that Log Cabin was bordered on the east by Navy Cut, on the west by Honey Dew; that twopenny cigars were situated on a peninsula, and wax matches formed a range of mountains. Proceeding to the cash drawers, Arthur was instructed to observe that four separate lakes existed, each with its own duty, and one was not on any account to be con-

fused with the rest. When he exhibited a desire to go in and see Harriet, Mr. Richards upbraided him for want of attention, and mentioned that all knowledge was worth acquiring, in that you never knew when it might prove useful; to retain him until the rush of business came many reminiscent anecdotes were told of railway life, incidents of difficulty faced by Inspector Richards at various periods, and always triumphantly overcome. Coming to more recent occurrences, a complaint was made that Harriet that morning going out to shop in High Street had been absent for no less than three-quarters of an hour.

"Don't go in there!" said a voice at the doorway. "That's old T. R.'s show. Let's go on higher up. He'll only try to boss it over us."

When Harriet sang out an announcement concerning the meal, the proprietor of the tobacconist's shop remarked brusquely that there was probably enough for two, but not sufficient for three, and in these circumstances he would not trouble Arthur to stay.

Mr. Richards was still watching the roadway, and wondering how it was possible for so many folk to pass by an attractive shop-window without stopping to give it the compliment of a glance, when he caught sight of one of his fellow-inspectors on the opposite side. Anxious for congenial company, he

gave an invitation with a wave of the hand, and the other, after a moment of thought, crossed over. Harriet made another deferential announcement.

"Just in time!" he cried genially. "Come along inside, Wilkinson, and share pot-luck."

"What do you call pot-luck?" inquired Wilkinson, with caution. Mr. Richards recited the brief menu, and the inspector decided to enter.

"Brought a friend," said Richards to his daughter in the back parlour.

"Then we shall want a fourth chair, father."

"No, we shan't. Wilkinson, sit you down and make yourself thoroughly at home. How are you muddling on without me?"

"Do you want the truth?"

"Let's hear the worst."

"We're getting on first class," announced Wilkinson, his eyes on Harriet, but his words addressed to her father. "Some of them were saying only this evening that it just proved how much could be done by kindness. There hasn't been a cross word since you left, and not a single member of the staff has had to be reported."

"You'll all have a nice job later on," he prophesied. "Let them get slack and out of control, and it'll take you months to get 'em well in hand again."

"How do you like the change, Miss?" asked Wilkinson, accepting the offer of lettuce. "How does business life suit you, may I ask?"

"Nothing to do with her!" interrupted her father sharply. "All she's responsible for is household duties. I believe in women keeping to their proper sphere. Once they come out of it——"

"The change hasn't improved your temp , old man."

He stopped in the act of helping himself to mustard, and stared at his late colleague. "Me?" he said, in a dazed way. "Me, got a temper? Well, upon my word, we live and learn. This is news!"

"Pretty stale to other people."

"I venture to challenge that statement," said Richards hotly. "I should like to have a decision on the point by some independent authority."

"Ask her!"

Harriet, appealed to and ordered to speak without fear or favour, said she wanted to know why Arthur was sent away. The answer was to the effect if she had finished gorging herself with food, she could go upstairs and leave her father and his friend to discuss matters which her youth and sex prevented her from understanding. Harriet had not completed her share of the meal, but she obeyed at once.

"That's the way to bring up a child," said Richards, with a jerk of the head. "I've only got to give her a hint. Wonderful control I exercise. I give my orders; she carries 'em out."

"You don't seem overwhelmed with customers," remarked the visitor, looking through the glass portion of the door.

"They either come with a run," he explained, "or not at all."

"I only go," went on Wilkinson, "by what I've heard at the station. They came here once for the lark of the thing, but the notion seems to be that once is plenty."

"And that," ejaculated the ex-inspector bitterly, "that, I suppose, is what they call *esprit de corps*."

"That's what they call getting their own back. And I don't want to discourage you, and I should like you to believe that I'm saying it only for your own good, but it's pretty clear to my mind that, in regard to this tobacconist's business, you're going to lose your little all. The savings of a lifetime are going to vanish like smoke, or rather not like smoke, but into thin air. Unless," added Wilkinson impressively—"unless you act wisely."

"Don't I always act wisely?"

Wilkinson shook his head. "The best of us are liable to make mistakes," he said

diplomatically, "and consequently you're more liable than most."

Mr. Richards failed in the attempt to make a knife balance on a fork, and sighed deeply.

"I've been here now for—how long?—and there hasn't been a single, solitary ring of the bell," went on Wilkinson. "You've got to look the facts squarely in the face."

"If the worst comes to the worst," announced the other grimly, "I shall sell the business and the goodwill and stock and everything, and embark on something entirely fresh—something where I shan't be dependent on the kindness of old friends."

"You'll get a big price for the goodwill," mentioned the visitor, with sarcasm. "And I suppose you've taken the premises on a lease?"

"Let me fetch you a cigar," suggested Mr. Richards desperately, "and then you give me the best advice that lays in your power."

"Pick out one that I can smoke."

Wilkinson's counsel, given after he had submitted the cigar to a sufficient test, was this. Competition, brisk and determined, existed in the trade on the part of large firms who opened shops all over the place. Small establishments could only exist by the possession of something in the shape of what Wilkinson called a magnet—a magnet to draw the people in.

"You mean a gramophone?"

Wilkinson meant nothing of the kind. What you had to bear in mind was, first, that all your possible customers belonged to what was known as the male persuasion; second, that by an old-established arrangement, which you might argue against but you had to accept, the male was always attracted by the female. Wilkinson added that in his opinion the daughter upstairs was a dashed good-looking girl, and, the cigar being near to its end, suggested that another might be presented to bear him company on the way home. And went.

"Harriet, my girl," said Mr. Richards, "I've thought of an idea that I may as well mention at once before I forget it. No doubt you've heard the remark about Satan and idle hands. And as there's no good reason why I should work my fingers to the bone, I shall want you to come into the shop of an afternoon and evening, and serve customers, and smile at 'em, and make yourself generally useful."

"Afraid you're too late, father," she said. "If you had let Arthur stay to supper, we were not going to tell you anything about it. As it is, you've got to be told that we were married this morning at the registrar's, and that I'm going to leave you now."

* * * * *

The shop is doing very well, and when you

happen to pass that way, you might step in and buy something. You will find Harriet at the counter serving goods of excellent quality at current prices ; in the evening her husband is also there. Glancing through the windowed door of the shop parlour, you may catch sight of ex-Inspector Richards, looking after the baby.

THE USURPER

VII

THE USURPER

HE told some friends whom he caught up on the way that his was a position of pretty middling tidy responsibility, and when he spoke more freely on the topic they gave a whistle which conveyed an amount of astonishment that proved gratifying. The lad explained to each in turn that his mother was an uncommonly good manager, able to make a penny go as far as some could use a shilling; each made the identical reply before selecting a turning on the right of Kingsland Road, that it must nevertheless be a close fit, and added, "Stick to it, old man; wish you better luck," with all the solemnity and earnestness of boys who have but recently started work. One or two acquaintances shouted to him from the tops of electric trams, flying Stamford Hill way, indicating by signs the existence of a vacant seat; he shook his head and marched on. Three girls, making their way home by a series of spasmodic rushes, with

at intervals hysterical appeals to each other not to act the silly (being, in fact, so delighted at release from work that they scarcely knew how to make proclamation of their happiness) —these snatched at his cap and, a few yards off, threw it back to him, taking at once to their heels, and later becoming extremely indignant because he had not respected the rules of the game by chasing them and administering punishment in the shape of a blow on the shoulder. Their annoyance at his reticent manner was so great that they presently waited, demanding of him when he arrived whether he thought himself everybody. Failing to obtain an answer, they furnished estimates on their own account, asserting (by happy choice of words) that he was deaf, dumb, or dotty; he did not trouble to contradict, and they gave him up. Nearing home, he increased his frown of importance.

"'Ullo, Tommy!"

"'Thomas,' if you please," he said, bending to kiss the child; "and don't let me catch you again swinging on this gate. You'll have the whole row of palings down, that's what you'll be doing. Big, clumsy girl like you."

The youngster, gratified by this compliment, took his hand, and led him to the front door, where she cried "Mother!" with a strong accent on the second syllable; on gaining a reply of "Now begin your nonsense

again," she announced the arrival. The boy hung his cap behind the door, and threw himself into an easy chair.

"No," he answered, with an exhausted air, "I can't play games with you this evening. Yes, yes, I know I used to; but them times are all past and gone. You're too young to understand, my girl, and it's as well you are, but life's a serious matter. Tell me, how've you been getting on at school to-day?"

"Teacher give me a rap over the knuckles."

"I don't like that."

"I didn't like it, neither."

"What I mean is," he went on, "that a little girl like you ought to do her best to learn all she can whilst she's got the opportunities. If you don't, why, later on, when it's too late, you'll be sorry. In the meantime, you want to do all you can to pick up everything at school, and not give your teachers opportunity for being cross with you in any shape or form whatsoever. You hear what I'm telling you. What's mother singing for?"

"Put this top somewhere," suggested the child, "whilst I turn my face to the wall—I won't look, truth and honour—and then you tell me when I'm getting warm and when I'm getting cold."

"Let's hear you spell it!"

The little person, found guilty of spelling top with two p's, not only had to accept a severe reprimand, but was called upon to spell pot, and pop, and one or two other words; when she had gone through the examination the boy agreed to conceal the article, and she set about with great enthusiasm on the task of finding it, but the game was so frequently interfered with by his admonitions concerning present behaviour, by warnings regarding future conduct, that she did not hide her satisfaction when the mother brought in his tea. The child was allowed to stand by and receive the top of the egg.

"Yes," admitted the mother, in answer to his challenge, "I am in rather good spirits. Would you like a second cup, Tommy, or another slice of bread and butter? You've only to say the word."

"These are not times," he decided, "for a man to make a hog of himself. You must arrange for the money to last as long as it possibly can, mother. Watch every penny. Don't let there be nothing in the shape of waste."

"I managed, my dear," she retorted, with spirit, "when your father was in work, and earning 35s. a week, and I've somehow managed during the last six weeks on your money alone. It's took a bit of doing," she sighed, "but I've done it."

"Set down and rest for a moment,"

recommended the boy. "Expect you're like me—you've had a hard day of it."

The little girl was expelled from the room for the reason that her mother, in sitting, found the concealed wooden top. The two were left to converse together; the boy found a crumpled cigarette in his pocket, and his mother, hunting for matches, sang the first lines of a song that belonged to her early youth.

"I've got no objection," he said, speaking with deliberation, between the puffs, "to you being light-'earted, but I hope you realise, mother, that I'm having to stint myself pretty considerably in order that you should make both ends meet."

"You're a good lad," she agreed, "as lads go nowadays!"

"I deny myself several luxuries, such as the first 'ouse at the local Empire, something extra for lunch, a new necktie for Sundays. This fag that I'm smoking at the present moment was given to me. I bring 'ome every penny I earn, and if I 'appen by any chance to make a bit extra, why, I bring that 'ome as well. I don't begrudge it in the least; shouldn't like you to think that of me, mother; all I want you to do is to recognise it. And if you care to mention the fact to neighbours, or friends, or even to relatives, why, there's no objection on my part."

"I've never made no secret of it, my

dear," she declared, reassuringly. "Your Aunt Mary was in only this afternoon, and you know what an inquisitive one she is. She brings a small pot of jam, and always expects about a ton of information in exchange. Wanted to know how I managed, and whether we was running into debt, and how long it was likely to last, and I don't know what all. I didn't tell her everything, but I did mention that if it hadn't been for you I don't know where we should have found ourselves."

"And what did she say?"

"Said I ought to be proud of you. Said she wished she had a son like you." He nodded approvingly, and continued to listen. "Said that, considering you only left school seven months ago——"

"Eight months."

"——you might reckon yourself a credit to the family."

"Anything else?"

"That's all she said about you."

He stretched himself, enjoying luxuriously the end of his cigarette.

"But," going on with relish, "I was able to take her down a peg before she went. Never said nothing about it until just as she was going, and then I told her, what I'm now going to tell you, my dear, and that is this: your father's been taken back by his old firm, and he started earning good

money this very day. Wherever are you off to in such a hurry? "

The boy snatched his cap from the wooden peg. He strode out by the front door, and walked away towards Dalston Junction, frowning.

JULES ZWINGER

VIII

JULES ZWINGER

THE probability is that, if you arrive by train and see first the Restaurant of the Station, you will stay at Zwinger's ; if you come into the town by road, crossing the bridge that spans the harbour, and see first the Restaurant of Zwinger, you will put up at the Restaurant of the Station.

Assuming that you stay at Zwinger's, this is what happens. The carrier of your bag (who looks like a fisherman, and walks as a fisherman, but is not a fisherman) throws it down outside the restaurant, and, sinking on one of the green iron chairs, groans aloud a protest against the scheme by which one has to work ere one can gain five pence ; he rolls a cigarette of black tobacco, and strikes a match which makes other customers choke and cough. Then comes, leisurely, one of the Misses Zwinger, accepting salutations with the austere air of a lady bored by deference. Miss Zwinger, without asking the desires or

wishes of the new arrival, engages in swift and shrill altercation with a dog, hitherto inoffensive, and occupied with the duties of explorer at the kerb; the dog goes, but, at a safe distance, expresses an opinion by four sharp barks, that bring from every corner of the triangular market-place, and especially from the Town Hall at the base, several dogs, to whom he explains the grievance.

"You require?"

Miss Zwinger calls her sister from the sanded floor interior to help with the task of fending off an insurgent boarder. The restaurant is full; you may be able to engage a furnished room opposite; why not go to the hotel out in the forest? It is preferred, at this season, to take only those who wish to stay for a month; would a double-bedded room suit? Finally, having finished the duet, they leave, with a twirl of skirts, giving the centre of the stage, so to speak, to a short, grim, black-capped man who, hands deep in trousers pockets, talks as one giving an imitation of distant thunder. Outside clients rise from their chairs, inside customers put down ribald journals with pictures intended to be amusing, and stroll out to enjoy themselves. Here comes the final test of the novice.

I have seen young couples, husbands and wives, or brothers and sisters, come from the narrow lane and, recognising Zwinger's, say instantly:

"Oh, my goodness! This will never do!"

Others (and these especially when ladies have been of the party) retire after the contest with the Misses Zwinger. Some, enduring this encounter, turn and run, trembling and affrighted, on being faced by the uncompromising host himself. A few (mostly artists) survive all of the dangers, and are grudgingly permitted to carry their bags up a narrow wooden staircase, and find a room, the number of which has been screamed at them: in the room they discover a milk jug nearly half-full of water, and a small damp piece of linen riding on the clothes-horse. Apart from these defects, I will say that Zwinger's, once conquered, gives in, so far as bedroom and meals are concerned, with a fairly good grace.

Dinner in the large room at the back (entrance gained by way of the kitchen) is a good, sufficient meal, to which it is only necessary to bring the appetite to be gained by wandering in the woods, or a brisk ride in tramcars from the sea. Framed paintings on the wall, and paintings on the wall with no frames, some a trifle obscured by age, and possessing the signatures of men no longer youthful. Four tables up and down the room; the table on the right reserved for a set of young women who, at the beginning of the evening meal, talk so persistently of the contributions they have made during the day to

the art of England and America, that one's French neighbour, with serviette tucked in at throat, can, I fear, scarcely hear himself eat his soup.

"Most awfully pleased with what I've done to-day. If the light hadn't begun to go off——"

"I'm like that, too. Sometimes I simply can't do anything, and then, another time——"

"My dear, the model was too comic for words. Talking all the time. If I'd only understood what he was saying, I could write a book about him, and that's a fact!"

"Absolutely in love with the place. Could stay here for a whole week, only I must be getting along."

The serving of the meal has a touch of over-emphasis that sometimes startles those who possess nerves; after a while, one becomes accustomed to the method of banging each dish on the table with a clatter. It is no exaggeration, but the mere truth to say that, a request being made for more bread, a chunk is cut from the yard-long loaves and thrown at the diner; with practice, a certain dexterity can be gained, especially by those expert in the cricket-field. Five courses to the meal, and now and again between two, a considerable interval, whilst the Zwinger family and its dependents have a row in the kitchen, the guests sitting back patiently until the last word is uttered. The nice question

of allotting this last word is not easy to decide, for when the rumbling bass of Zwinger has fired what appears to be a parting shot, and the girls return to the dining-room with plates, and guests pull chairs forward, one of the young women may think of another argument, and the two go back to the kitchen, where the dispute recommences. The quarrel finally at an end, the Zwinger ladies come in, scarlet as a result of animated discussion, and they serve the next course with more than usual truculence. Boarders go outside to take their coffee and to smoke, eyed narrowly, as they pass through, by Zwinger, to be joined at tables on the pavement by wonderful youths in corduroy suits, which suggest that they are either artists with a definite aim in life, or porters belonging to the railway of the North.

You can always tell at Zwinger's a new arrival by the circumstance that, after taking some thought in regard to the arrangement and wording of the phrase, he advances to the counter, where Zwinger scowls in a manner that excuses the acidity of contents of some of the bottles ranged there.

"It makes good weather," remarks the new arrival, cheerily.

Zwinger replies with an ejaculated grunt.

"Many of the world here?"

Zwinger—a most difficult speaker to report with accuracy—says something like "S-s-t!"

"If you will have the kindness to give me a good cigar."

Zwinger pushes a box forward, and the perplexed new arrival, tempted, I am sure, to fall back on Ollendorf, and to ask for the new inkstand of his great-uncle, refrains from further speech, and tempts the fates by making selection from the compartment marked 15 c. Outside he, on explaining his grievance, ascertains that there is no need to feel specially dishonoured by the gruffness accorded to him. Zwinger must not be considered with the eye that one gives to, say, the manager of the Carlton away in London. Zwinger (declare the hopeful) may be right enough once you get to know him. Zwinger (admit the candid) is certainly trying, but you have to put up with something in coming to a quiet place of this kind. The tramcars clang, and hoot, and screw across the market-place, and provide a more pleasing subject for conversation.

Disappearance of the curfew bell might have been coincident with the entry of Zwinger into public life. At a quarter past ten, he shows signs of restlessness, jerking commands to the long man-servant, keeping at the doorway a keen eye on the round tables. As each becomes free, Zwinger orders it, with its chairs, to be taken inside, and, although he permits himself to exhibit no signs of gratification, I am certain he feels secretly

pleased when small parties of young men come across, and, finding no place, give up their original intention. If they endeavour to pass through the doorway, Zwinger, taking no notice of them, remains there so stolidly that they are compelled to take notice of him. I have seen him snatch newspapers from the hands of those who appeared disinclined to observe the face of the clock: I have observed him give a hint to an occupied chair by kicking it. He turns down the lights, one by one. In desperate cases, where a couple of young Englishmen, with the conventional ideas of the licence enjoyed at restaurants abroad, fill a fresh pipe, I have seen him take a broom, and, with a few resolute strokes, send them choking and half-blinded from the restaurant. When a late-stayer, with an idea of making a good and amiable exit, says, in departing, "Good-night to the company!" Zwinger responds with one of those grunts not to be found in any French or English dictionary. Every one gone, he takes a black cigar from the case, orders the girls to go to bed, and, at the doorway, stands a good half-hour in order to enjoy the satisfaction of saying, when any one arrives, "Closed!"

Bad luck for any resident who returns so late that Zwinger has retired to rest. For him, the restaurant presents no light, and, if he cares to be well-advised, he will give up the attempt at once and spend the hours on

the bridge, smelling the tide, and watching the flashlight that sweeps round from a point on the coast. Should he prove obstinate, and persist in knocking, he is engaged on a lengthy sport; the worst thing that can happen is that Zwinger himself, and not the long man-servant, should come down presently to give admission. Cheerful blades have, ere this, on the door being opened, tried to meet Zwinger with a pleasantry, affecting to have brought the milk, or giving an imitation of the crowing of a cock, but a look from Zwinger arrests. Others, less daring and more diplomatic, rush past, snatch their candlestick from the counter, and vanish with the celerity easy to those possessed by sudden fear; the next morning they go out by the side door, take a roundabout route to gain the other side of the market-place, cross the bridge, and hide in the forest. There is a report (which some credit, but I do not) of one young man, leaving after a stay of six weeks, during which time the proprietor exchanged no word with him; in going, he suddenly dropped his kit bag, seized Zwinger by the hand, wrung the hand with enthusiasm for the space of nearly a minute, thanking the astonished Zwinger the while for great amiability and kindness, and genial behaviour; expressing a fervent hope that Zwinger, when visiting Chelsea, would not fail to call at the Art Club in Church Street. The statement is that

this was done for a bet. Those who assume it to be true are forced to admit that France, with all its stirring history, has rarely seen a braver act.

Yet I, who write these words, have seen the proprietor for one whole day change his outlook, reverse his manner, alter his deportment. The day came rather late in the season, and nearly every one had left, but corroborative evidence can be called if necessary. The night before, a hint, broad without being deep, was given by the Misses Zwinger to the effect that no guarantee existed that meals would be provided on the day: they pointed out the example which would be adopted by some other boarders, of catching the 10.23 in the morning to a neighbouring town, returning in the evening by the 9.48. Throughout the night, from half-past ten until an hour I am unable to fix, the noise of sawing, the thud of hammer and nails, went on in the restaurant, with all the usual arguments that arise when carpentry has to be done. Clatter and contention, bustle and loud voices; Zwinger, himself, growling now and again to express dissatisfaction with everything. I remember that, by the device of making sympathetic inquiries after rheumatism, it was possible in the morning to get from cook a roll and a cup of coffee, and to escape from the din, which had recommenced, through the convenient side door, and jump

on the last carriage of a tram-train that went out to the sea. At one o'clock, the return.

A crowd outside Zwinger's. A crowd made up of frock-coated men, with red ribbon in buttonhole; men in full evening dress, silk hats (some of which appeared, from their shapes, to be the results of investments in the 'eighties), a few bowler hats coming well down to the ears; boots, in certain instances, shining and pointed, in others more substantial, with dust collected from high-roads. Much lifting of these silk hats and these bowlers, with extraordinary deference on the part of many, beaming condescension on the part of the rest; an evident desire with the prosperous to set the remainder at their ease. Inside the restaurant, long tables set on trestles, that accounted for the turbulent proceedings which had broken the night, flowers in every spare mug, vase, or glass: flags dependent from the ceiling; the Misses Zwinger, costumed as though about to run on in musical comedy. Through the kitchen came, pulling his white tie, and pushing in one side of a shirt-front that immediately bulged out on the other side, Zwinger himself. A new Zwinger, a Zwinger I had never seen before, a smile in every crease of his features, saluting me with a light, friendly touch on the shoulder.

"What magnificent weather! Ah, how fortunate we are! Monsieur will do us the

honour to sit down with us? But yes. I count upon you! Marie, Jeannette!"

He gave sprightly orders to his girls, and passed out to be received with something that resembled long-continued cheers. All came in ten minutes later, Zwinger leading the way, and escorting a prosperous man with the figure of an American desk, who, in acknowledging my bow, gave to himself a third chin. Zwinger, having placed him at the top of one of the long tables, bustled around, urging the rest to take their seats, giving a shout of welcome to late comers, and presently taking a chair at the lower end of the second long table with myself on his right, a Mr. Honoré on his left.

"Much flattered!" said Mr. Honoré, accepting the introduction.

"Seated," declared Zwinger of himself, jovially, "seated between two good friends."

Red wine stood on the white-clothed tables, and this gave me a moment of depression, until Zwinger, on soup being cleared, whispered to me a reassuring word, and I found that, despite similarity of labels, the contents of the bottles had no resemblance or likeness to the beverage usually supplied. Talk up and down the tables was mainly of births, marriages, and deaths, with, now and again, a description of recent illness. Also, the state of trade and the condition of agriculture, and a few references to politics,

so guarded that I knew it could not be a lunch given in the interests of any political party. I asked a question.

"Wait!" said Zwinger, mysteriously.

I give you my word of honour that he winked.

At the end of the meal—a good meal, well-cooked, and served in a way that had nothing of the slap-dash-bang to which one was accustomed in the dining-room—Zwinger went around with cigars, pressing the best and longest upon the acceptance of the company, detained frequently in the course of his tour by affectionate greetings, by honest congratulations on the meal. He spoke in the ear of the Chairman—a Sub-Prefect, so Mr. Honoré assured me, nothing less—and scuttled back to his seat just in time to assume an attitude of listening as the Chairman rose.

We were assembled, said the Chairman, to honour and acclaim once more the day of September, that was ever in our hearts. (Very good.) We were assembled to do honour to those who fought with us on that great day, and fell beside us for the honour and glory of France. (Very good, very good.) We were here—— The Chairman called gesture to the aid of eloquence, swinging his left arm with a backward movement; guests leaned forward to miss nothing, their faces becoming flushed as he proceeded, eyes filling as he recited the names of those who had gone from this world

since the last meeting. His rapidity of utterance increased: the guests panted as they followed eagerly: one man rose in his excitement, and neighbours pulled him down. At the door of the kitchen, the two girls, bearing trays of coffee, waited, trembling with excitement so that the cups rattled. A perfect cascade of phrases; glory, country, honour, comrades, revenge, every word rushing past the others, and then Zwinger sprang to his feet, echoed the toast wildly, and, holding his glass, clinked it with mine, clinked it with Mr. Honoré's, saluted the company, drank, and sat down.

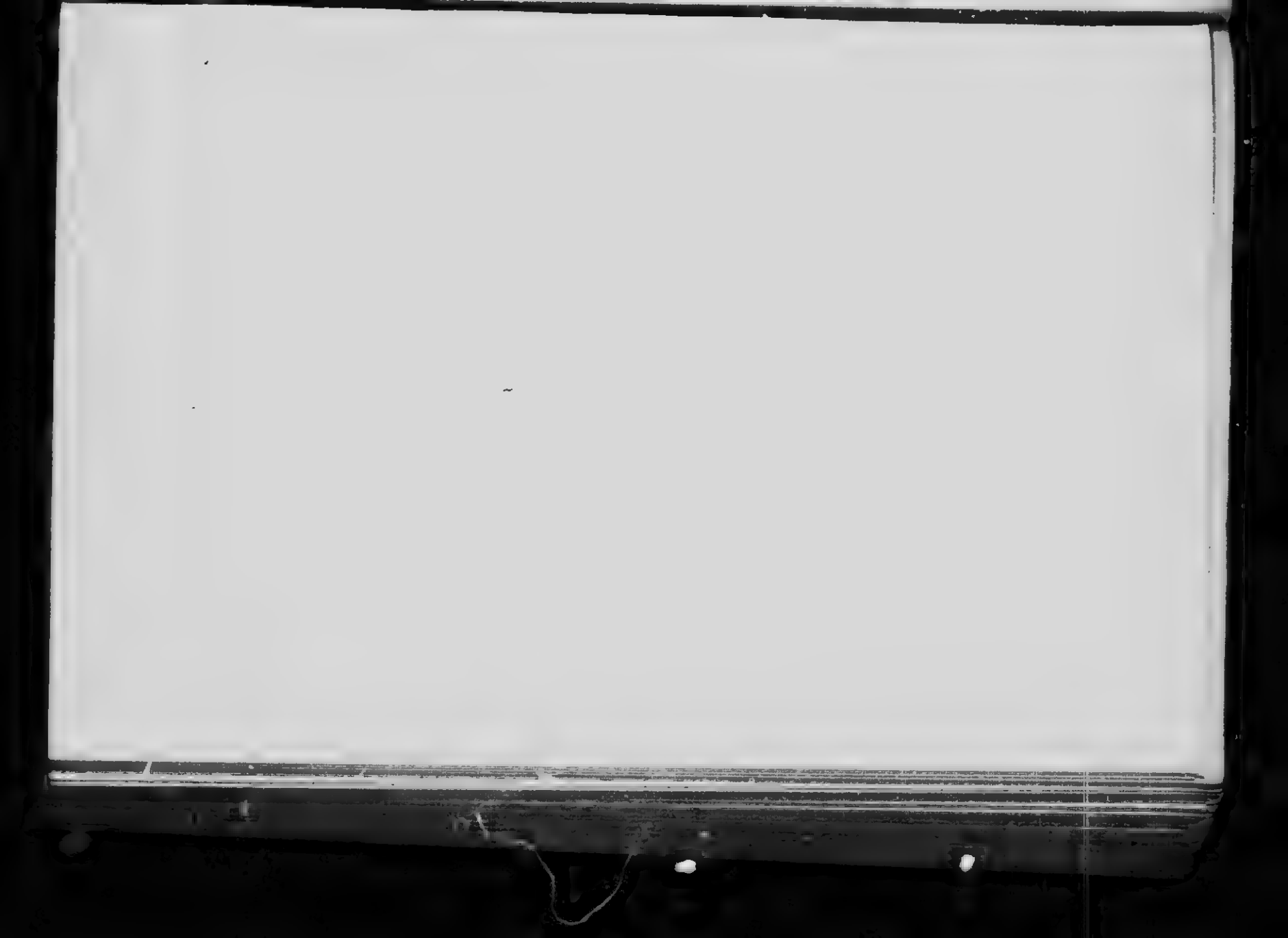
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The carpenters were early at work the following morning, joining thus to their duties the functions of an alarum clock. As I went out for a stroll at eight, intending to go so far as the fringe of the woods and back, I saw Zwinger walking up and down outside the restaurant, his hands deep in jacket pockets.

"My felicitations," I said, cheerily, "on the enormous success of——"

Zwinger gave one of his monosyllables that express disinclination for speech, disinclination to listen to speech from other people. Turning, he slippered away.

THE LEADING LADY



IX

THE LEADING LADY

To tell the truth, I was not feeling in my best form. Just before entering the tram-car I had a brief dispute with my mother in regard to the contents of a fruit-shop at the beginning of Gray's Inn Road. There are many subjects on which the two of us fail to see eye to eye, and frequently a somewhat acrimonious debate ends in triumph on her side. At times, we get along admirably together; at others a recommendation from her that I should not exhibit temper goads me into something like fury. The storm over, I am sorry that it happened. My mother has often remarked that I can be a perfect lady when I like.

"Not a one to nurse a grievance," she adds. "A couple of minutes and it's all past and forgotten."

Our entry into the car was scarcely auspicious, partly because the question of cherries had not vanished from my thoughts,

partly because I wanted to go up the steps and my mother was resolved to go inside; the conductor spoke sharply, and my mother resented his tones. He expressed satisfaction in the knowledge that all passengers did not closely resemble us, and my mother retorted that if there were many conductors of his style people would prefer to walk. He said he supposed that she, being a woman, would insist on having the final word, and my mother suggested it must give him a nasty shock to find himself correct for the first time in his life; she added something about his features which struck me as being not in quite the best taste. I tugged at her arm.

"You be quiet!" she said to me sharply. "Perfect worry, that's what you are. Catch me ever letting you come out again to look at the shops!"

The car started from Holborn on its twopenny journey to Stamford Hill in these circumstances. The conductor, in collecting fares, scowled at me, and I frowned back at him; before going up the steps he looked in again to say ironically that we were a pretty pair. A young man with his sweetheart seated next to us thought the remark was addressed to him, and there ensued a fresh wrangle, at the end of which the youth took the conductor's number, and half the passengers said the conductor had not gone

outside the bounds of common civility; the other half referred to him as a Jack-in-office. The young woman spoke to me and made some complimentary allusion to my looks and general appearance.

"Keep still!" ordered my mother. "I won't have you talking to Tom, Dick, and Harry."

I knew that argument was useless; it would have been a waste of time to point out that these names could not be rightly applied to my new friend. She, an amiable person, showed me the Holborn Town Hall, and remarked that she sometimes went to concerts there; the reference must have suggested something to me, for, despite my mother's efforts to restrain, I lifted up my voice and sang. It was but a simple melody, but the earnestness I put into it seemed to touch the hearts of other passengers, and when I finished they had ceased the dispute regarding the conductor and were nodding to me pleasantly.

"Less noise inside there!" commanded the conductor, returned from upstairs.

"Let her sing if she wants to," said a matronly woman near the door.

"I'm not a-going to have this tramcar turned into a Queen's Hall," he declared, "and you ought to know yourself better than encourage her."

"I was young myself once."

"That wasn't yesterday," he suggested.

The song had received so much favour that I considered the wisdom of giving them either another or diversifying the entertainment by offering some of my celebrated imitations. These have always been highly successful at home and at the houses of relatives ; an uncle of mine remarked on one occasion that they were far and away superior to the originals. I had not, however, previously attempted them before an audience of strangers, and this, for the moment, made me shy and nervous. The moment of hesitation over, I started.

"Now, that's what I call clever," said the young man near to us. "Milly, if you could only do something like that I might get reelly fond of you!"

My first idea was to make eyes at him ; reflection told me that the love of a man who was so easily influenced could never be worth having, and I reassured the girl with a smile. Glancing up and down the car, I could see that I had now secured complete attention. Men had folded up evening newspapers, and were waiting to see what I would do next ; women beamed in my direction and one opposite offered me chocolates. I took the box, but my mother, whose knowledge of the rules of etiquette forms the subject of one of her proudest boasts, said it would be more genteel to select only one of the sweets. I accepted the hint, and my mother—now in

good temper, and making no attempt to conceal the fact—remarked to the others that I had always been noted for excellence of behaviour.

I gave next a recitation—one of my own composition—a short but telling piece, with somewhat humorous references to the incident of a cat who found its saucer of milk empty. This went only fairly well; I think I must give more care to voice-production. The matronly lady near the door asked what it was supposed to be all about, and my mother readily furnished a sort of synopsis. Some one begged I would sing again, but, discouraged by the cool acceptance of the recital, I declined, until my mother begged and entreated me not to sing. At the conclusion there was that genuine and hearty applause which every public performer recognises and welcomes.

"Bless my soul!" cried some of the passengers, "Shoreditch Church, already!" They said goodbye to me, and I endeavoured to thank them for their kindness in listening to my poor efforts. One offered me a coin, which I flung upon the floor. I am an amateur, not a professional.

It was as the car went up Stoke Newington Road that I introduced my most diverting item. It has always pleased, but I was not certain that here it would be appreciated. The idea is to begin with a smile, to allow the

smile to broaden and become more pronounced; this is followed by a chuckle, and then comes a peal of laughter. My mother identified the early stages, and, trembling with pride, warned the rest to pay special and particular notice. I am not exaggerating when I say that in less than a minute I had the whole car with me—every one amused, some roaring. The conductor put his hand over his face, but was compelled to give way, and he went so far as to admit, very handsomely, that it was the funniest thing he had witnessed outside the Dalston Hippodrome.

"Don't tire yourself, darling," begged my mother solicitously, and speaking in aristocratic tones. "Be careful not to overdo it. You know what you're like when you've been excited."

I pushed her advice aside, and when the car slowed up near the station I do believe all who were going on to the terminus felt honestly sorry to see me preparing to leave. As we stood on the pavement—the conductor had given us a hand, and he apologised for brusqueness of behaviour at the start, explaining that there had been an awkward passenger on the previous journey, and they had come to words—as we stood, I say, on the pavement, every one in the car waved hands, and the young man, I was gratified to notice, blew a kiss.

"Hullo, Ernest!" said my mother. "Here we are at last. Been waiting long?"

"Months and months and months," replied my father. "What sort of a girl has she been? Baby," he went on, addressing me, and taking me in his arms, "you may be as clever as your mother tries to make out, but I take me oath you don't get none the lighter as time goes on!"

TIME'S METHOD

X

TIME'S METHOD

"TRAIN rather late, surely," remarked Mr. Chelsfield deferentially to the Inspector.

"What do you expect?" demanded the official, turning upon him suddenly. "What do you look for at a time like this?"

"My son!" replied the other, with pride. "Me and his mother have give him six months at a boarding-school in Kent, and he's coming home this afternoon."

"I don't mean what you mean." The Inspector became more calm as he essayed the task known to railway men as knocking sense into the heads of the public. "What I intended to say was that at this time of the year, and with all these specials about, it's only reasonable to assume that the ordinary trains—— See what I'm driving at, don't you? Steam's a wonderful invention, but we can't do impossibilities. Think of the old coaching-days; what must it have been like then?"

"His mother's waiting at home, else I shouldn't be so eager."

"Ah!" said the Inspector, with a touch of either sentiment or condescension. "We all know what women are."

Mr. Chelsfield, walking along the platform with the Inspector for the sake of company and the encouragement of warmth, had to admit that he felt equally anxious, and offered the present of a cigar which he described as harmless; the official accepted it graciously, and promised to make it the subject of an experiment on the following Sunday afternoon. In return he gave the latest news from Chiselhurst, and guaranteed to eat his silk hat if the Emperor recovered. He felt sorry for Napoleon, and expressed the view that it was a pity there was only one son in the family. Nice enough young fellow, it was true; he had shaken hands with the Inspector once, but if anything happened to the Prince Imperial, where would they be? The Inspector's estimate of the right number in a family coincided with the number in his own.

"This," said Mr. Chelsfield, with a nod in the direction of the down line—"this is the only one we've got. Only one we ever had."

"Take care not to spoil him. That's always the risk when there's only one. Now my six—— Here's the train signalled. Get

to the other end of the platform, and then you can't miss him."

The platform was long under its wooden roof, and Mr. Chelsfield could not move with the celerity he had shown in the early 'sixties ; some of his colleagues at the warehouse said it was rheumatism, but he declared it to be only a slight stiffness of the joints. Passengers were going through the barrier, and, flushed by anxiety, he looked about ; presently made a dash through the crowd, seized a lad who wore a mortar-board, and pinched his ear affectionately. On the lad turning and demanding an explanation, Mr. Chelsfield apologised for his error, and hurried off to continue his search.

"Three hours and a half," said the friendly Inspector later. "That's what it is before the next. It isn't worth while waiting if you only live up in Holborn. Hop into a 'bus outside the station."

"I must," Mr. Chelsfield admitted concernedly. "I'm bound to go back and tell his mother. She'll be out of her mind else."

"Just my argument," claimed the Inspector. "Now, if you'd got six, like I have——"

Mr. Chelsfield stepped out of the omnibus at Chancery Lane, and, paying the conductor, went along to Bedford Row with some wisps of the straw belonging to the conveyance attached to his boots. He felt

himself to be on the edge of a painful scene, and wondered where he should find the sal volatile if it happened to be wanted. The front door of the offices, with its elaborate knocker, was open, and he went slowly downstairs to the living-rooms.

"Well?" said his wife. He shook his head. "Speak up!" she commanded; "I can't hear when you turn your face to the wall and mumble like that."

He gave the explanation and waited for signs of collapse.

"You're a pretty one to send to a railway-station, and no mistake!" she remarked, taking off the tea-cosy. "Another time I must go myself."

"None for me, mother," he said desolately. "I couldn't drink it even if you poured it out. Wonder what's happened to the boy?"

"How should I know?"

He walked up and down the room, looked through the window at the iron grating, and rubbed his head furiously with a red pocket-handkerchief, the wife watching him with an amused expression. As she took the knife in order to cut the home-made cake, still warm from the oven, he raised his hand as a feeble protest against asking him to taste food.

"Can we have the winder open?" he asked submissively. "This room seems stuffy to

me, or else it is that I'm upset. I feel—I feel as though I can't sit down at this table."

"Suppose," said his wife, with a wink—"suppose you have a look underneath it."

The boy crawled out, smoothed his hair, and submitted a forehead to his parent; the mother came near to choking with delight at the success of her elaborate scheme, and presently leaned head exhaustedly against the antimacassar which protected the back of the horsehair easy-chair. How on earth had they missed each other?—that was what the delighted father wanted to know. Henry must have jumped out of the train and cut away uncommonly sharp. Henry, permitted under the special circumstances to discard convention and begin with cake, working back through the toast to the bread and butter, confessed that he had lost no time.

"But, my lad," urged his father more seriously, "you knowed that I was coming to meet you."

"Had another fellow with me," replied the boy.

"Oh!"—arresting a doubled piece of bread and butter on its way from the plate—"and didn't you want him to see me?"

"Don't be silly, father!" interposed the mother. "Henry, my child, ask if you want a second piece."

"It wasn't exactly that," aid the boy.

"Then, perhaps, you'll kindly tell me what

was the reason. Come on, now ; out with it ! I want an answer."

"Thought perhaps you might kiss me, father. And Watherston standing by."

"Very natural on the boy's part," declared the mother. "You forget that Henry's growing up. He doesn't mind it in private, but there comes a time when a boy doesn't want all this fuss in public."

"If that was the only reason—— " said the father.

"Don't talk with your mouth full ! " ordered his wife. "You never see Henry do it. And one arm off the table, if you please." Her husband obeyed, taking up an attitude of greater precision and obvious discomfort. "That sounds like Gleeson & Co. going out ; I shall have to see about my pail and flannel, and get up there and do their floor."

"I thought——" began the boy sharply.

"We decided otherwise, my dear," she said. "We didn't settle it in a hurry by any means ; your father and me talked it over night after night, and eventually we came to a definite conclusion."

"You see, my lad "—the father took up the explanation—" there was money going out for your schooling, and provisions don't get no cheaper, and we was both anxious not to touch the little nest-egg we've put by. Besides " —with spirit, on noting the crimson look of annoyance on his son's face—" besides, it's

purely a matter for us to settle. If your mother doesn't mind going on with the housekeeper work, and if I don't object to her doing it, why, there's nothing more to be said."

The tea-table endured a silence of nearly a minute. The two parents examined the pattern of the oilcloth that covered it.

"Pardon me," said the boy, with the new manner acquired at the boarding-school, "but am I to understand that my feelings are not to be considered in the matter?"

The mother put out her hand quickly and patted her husband's arm, upraised to give a gesture that would emphasise his reply. He dropped it, and took a long, loud drink from a saucer that trembled.

"We can talk about this," she said hurriedly, "another time. We shall have a clear fortnight, Henry, before you start work. Say grace!" They bowed their heads, and joined in the Amen. "Did you make some nice new friends at the boarding-school, my dear? We've arranged all about your party for the fifteenth, and I think, by a little scrouging and a hand-round supper, we ought to be able to manage twelve. Including us three, that is. If we go over that, there's always the risk of having the unlucky number, and that spoils everybody's pleasure. Come along with me, and we can have a good talk over the arrangements whilst I'm tying on my apern. What

I was wondering was whether we should have all boys, old friends of yours about the neighbourhood, or whether to invite a few girls. There's your friend Jessie," she bustled on waggishly. "We mustn't let her feel neglected. Always asks after you, Jessie does." She lowered her voice. "Your father's got the idea into his head that the boarding-school may have induced you to be high and mighty, and make you look down on them and us. But of course, my dear, I know better."

The boy was leaning against the stout oak door later, as his mother cleaned and hearthstoned the steps; two minutes, she remarked, and her work would be over. In reply to his urgent appeal, she gave a promise that so soon as he began to earn money the work should be finished for good. A lad in a mortar-board came through from the direction of Holborn, and strolled up on the other side, examining the numbers. Attracted by the sound of voices, he crossed over and spoke.

"I say, my good woman," he said, with cheerful condescension, to the kneeling figure, "Number thirty-five, I want. These figures are so confoundly indistinct. Name, Chelsfield—Henry Chelsfield. Can you tell me where I shall find him?"

"You haven't fur to go," she remarked, and beckoned with her handful of flannel. "I must apologise for being caught in my

disables," she went on, levering herself up with the aid of the pail. "Shan't hear the last of this for a long time. Still, as I say, we've all got to live."

Her son came forward, and, waiting for the introduction, she smoothed her grey hair with the back of a wet hand. The boy's father came out, too, wearing a tasselled smoking-cap rakishly; to honour the occasion he had lighted the fellow to the cigar given away to the friendly Inspector.

"Hullo, Chelsfield!"

The boy glanced at his mother, looked over a shoulder at his father. He hesitated for a moment, then cleared the damp steps at a single jump, and taking his friend's arm, led him across the roadway.

"Called round, Chelsfield," the mortar-board lad said, "called round at once to tell you that I find I'm engaged two deep for the evening you've fixed for Drury Lane. Now, what I want to suggest is this. How about you changing your date?"

The father and mother stood just outside the doorway, speaking no word, but listening and waiting. The visitor made a movement to re-cross, but Henry detained him. The mother coughed in order to give a reminder of her presence. The visitor, breaking off in the discussion, recommended that Henry should fetch a cap and stroll with him as far as Gray's Inn Road and see him into a

Favorite omnibus for the return to Islington. Henry ran in, with a mumbled explanation to his parents.

"Quite an old-fashioned bit of London here," remarked the polite boy.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Chelsfield, coming forward eagerly. "Oh, yes, sir. People often notice that. Years ago, I b'lieve, quite aristocrats used to live here. London's changing."

"Improving," suggested the lad.

"I reckon the next thirty years will show a lot of difference. Me and the wife," he continued, with a jerk of the head towards her, "me and her, we recollect 'Olborn, of course, long before the Viaduct was opened. Previous to that——"

Their boy came out between them with a rush.

"Ready, Chelsfield?"

"Quite ready, Watherston," he replied, nervously and briskly.

"Sorry to have missed seeing your people," remarked the polite lad, as they went off arm-in-arm. "Perhaps some other time I may have the pleasure."

"Perhaps!" he said.

* * * * *

The space of time mentioned by old Chelsfield elapsed, but he prevented himself from enjoying the content of a successful prophet by commencing rather absurdly to break up

in health almost immediately after venturing upon the tolerably safe anticipation. Amongst the changes of thirty years was the fact that Chelsfield, as a name, had become better known ; even the folk who flew through the main streets of London on motor omnibuses, and had to give nearly all their attention to the holding on of hats, could not evade recognition of the hoardings ; the Chelsfield posters declined to be ignored. If you closed your eyes to these, you were nearly sure to encounter the name in your daily paper. If you missed it in your daily paper, it came into the letter-box, marked "Very Important." If you dodged it there, it confronted you on your theatre programme at night. Leaving the theatre and endeavouring to forget the name, you saw it at a popular corner, being written with great deliberation in illuminated letters, as though some invisible giant had made up his mind to grasp the rudiments of education.

Henry Chelsfield himself was not insensible to the determined appeals, and, going home in his electric brougham, he counted them. Thus one evening he found a dreary gap between the Cobden statue and the Britannia, and immediately made memorandum of the circumstance in his note-book, in order that the deplorable omission might be attended to on the following day. All very well for the advertising agents to send him a box for the

theatre, but these people had to be kept up to the mark.

"I can be amiable enough," he said to the clock inside the brougham, "in private affairs, but I'm very different where money matters are concerned."

Chelsfield might be flattering himself, or he might be telling the truth; anyhow he was a Londoner, with a Londoner's weakness for orders for the play. That was why he had left his offices early; that was why he proposed to eat at an unusual hour; that was why, on arriving at Hampstead, he ordered the man to bring the brougham round again at half-past seven. He dined alone, with a portrait of a good-looking woman, painted by Herkomer, facing him; at her side a lad, with small eyes rather close to each other. Chelsfield lifted his glass when the two maids had left the room and said:

"Jessie!"

He did not drink a toast to the boy.

Watherston, from a house nearer the Heath, came in as Chelsfield pretended to smoke a cigarette—he had been thinking that one man in a private box would present a lonely figure to the audience; the gallery would say that he had no friends—and Watherston asked to be excused for once from joining in a game of billiards.

"Nothing could have happened better!" cried Chelsfield, arousing himself. "You

have only to run home and jump into evening dress, and—— "

"My boy wants me to take him to see the conjuring people at St. George's Hall."

"You're not spoiling that lad of yours, I hope, Watherston?"

"I'm not spoiling my lad," retorted Watherston, speaking with emphasis. The two men gazed at each other with the sudden acerbity of manner that comes at times to the closest friends. Chelsfield's eyes went presently to the fruit on the table. "Ever hear anything of yours?" demanded Watherston, following up his advantage.

"There's no doubt whatever," replied Chelsfield testily, "that he disappeared in South Africa. I don't want to discuss the matter again. He was older than your boy. And you know as well as I do that after his mother died he went to the bad."

"You told him to stay there?"

"I can give you and your lad a lift as far as Kingsway," said Chelsfield, "if that's of any use."

"It won't be much help to us," replied his friend candidly; "but we shall be company for you."

The Watherston boy was enthusiastic about the swift ride, enthusiastic about the performance he was about to see, enthusiastic at being with his father, enthusiastic over everything. Chelsfield, watching him on the

way, thought that no man desired any better company than that of a cheerful son. Arrived at Holborn, he suddenly announced that he had decided to take the complimentary step of giving up the theatre-box and of joining them in their visit to St. George's Hall. As he lowered the window and put his head out to speak to his man, the boy and father conferred in a whisper.

"Chelsfield!" said the friend, touching his sleeve.

"What now?"

"Let us get out. I want to speak to you privately. Fact is"—on the pavement—"fact is—you know what boys are, and I'm sure you won't mind—but he tells me that he would rather go with me alone; and, to tell you the truth, I don't want to share him this evening. You see, he goes back to Rugby to-morrow."

Chelsfield dismissed his brougham and decided to walk the remainder of the way. He went with head down, and so deep in thought that it startled him when, in a turning from the new highway, he was accosted by one of a long file of men, waiting to march into the shelter for the night. There were about a hundred of them—old, young, middle-aged, all imperfectly shod, hands in pockets. He glanced along the line before replying. The light from a lamp showed the face of one, the youngest of all.

"Right you are," said the man who had spoken to him, in an amiable tone of voice, "if you 'aven't got any tobacker, you can't give us none."

"I'll—I'll go and get some," he remarked with agitation.

"Good iron!" said the man approvingly.

Chelsfield returned from the Strand breathless, a parcel under his arm, and, removing the string with trembling fingers, began the work of distribution. Some of the men received the ounce gratefully, some mentioned that it was all done for the sake of advertisement, some demanded why he had not also brought pipes, some accepted with a snatch. Chelsfield had not regained full control of his breathing powers when he reached the lamp.

"No, thanks!"

"You—you are not a smoker?"

"I am a smoker; but I don't accept anything from you."

Chelsfield took his son's hand and tried to pull him from his place. "I want to speak to you, dear boy. I've something important to say."

"You said something important to me once," retorted the other doggedly, "and you don't have a chance of saying anything important to me again. Be off, before I set the others on to you." His attitude expressed determination.

Chelsfield's housekeeper, at breakfast the next morning, asked in her respectful manner what he thought of the comedy he had seen the previous night. Chelsfield told her that he considered it extremely far-fetched.

SCOTTER'S LUCK

XI

SCOTTER'S LUCK

His opponent, after a good look at the table, adjusted his cue, and, disregarding the murmur of "Whitechapel!" sent spot white into a pocket. Many of the spectators volunteered advice, the while Scotter stood back and glanced self-commiseratingly at the scoring-board.

"That all I am, marker?" he inquired.

"That's your total figure, my lad."

Scotter's opponent took time in aiming at the red, and the suggestion that he had gone to sleep did not induce him to hurry. Striking his own ball gently and rather high up, the two travelled slowly into baulk. Scotter remarked dismally that this was just his luck, and found spot white; he was about to make a wild shot up and down the table when he changed his mind, and, considering angles, drew back his cue and prepared to send his ball at a particular point of the cushion.

"This ought to do it," he said, "but whether it will or not is more than I can——"

A bell rang. On the instant the men were out of the billiard-room; Scotter the last, because his first neat and orderly idea was to replace his cue in the stand, the second, a time-saving notion, was to leave it resting against the table, and in this confusion of thought a few moments were wasted. As the two horses plunged and reared in the yard, and made a dash through the short avenue of people outside the gates, one or two of his helmeted colleagues expressed the opinion that when the last trump sounded Scotter would be the last to respond, bringing with him an assortment of about ten good and sufficient excuses. Above the clanging and the noise, he was asked whether he had ever been really in time for anything but his meals; he blushed when they declared that girls were probably waiting for him at altars in various churches of London, growing old and cross and tired.

"Where are we bound for?" he asked, to change the subject.

"We're going to a fire, Scotty, my lad," it was explained. "Didn't you know? You thought we were off to an evening party, to have a game of postman's knock. But no; we're going to a fire, and we've got to put it out soon as we possibly can.

Remember that, won't you? Not to make it burn brighter, but to put it out. It's done with the aid of a syphon of soda. You take the syphon like this, and you remark to the fire, 'Say when!' and then——"

Southampton Row, at the narrow part, blocked with confused traffic; the wild horses had to pretend to be tamed whilst a passage was made. Fire-engines were also coming along Hart Street and from Kingsway; tram-cars bobbing up from the tunnel waited politely. The engine managed to reach the street, and a stout superintendent, glancing at his watch, told the men they stood an excellent chance of winning the booby prize.

"For that pretty compliment," they said, dropping from the engine, "we have to thank you, Mister Sleepy Scotter, Esquire."

Police keeping the people back; the street already a river, streams of water being sent high up at two houses, neighbours' faces out with the nearest wearing an expression of anxiety, whilst those a few doors off and opposite showed nothing more than interest. Furniture hurled out of windows, with now and again a smash. The firemen went about their work alertly and swiftly; when an order was given half a dozen hurried to obey. More engines arriving and two ladders. On the second floor of one of the houses a burst of flame that cracked the windows.

"Is everybody out?" demanded an official.

"All out, sir."

"Sure?"

Mrs. Mather was called. Mrs. Mather, found in tears on the kerb, with children around her, was asked sharply whether these represented her entire family; replied that if they did but stand still she would count them. One, two, three, four, five; yes, sir; we're all here. Mather himself away on a job at Silvertown. All the dear, blessed youngsters safe, thanks be; might have been a good deal worse. Mrs. Mather had never been in a fire before, but an aunt of hers living up at Sadler's Wells way once had the misfortune to overturn a lamp—What was that? Six? No, no; the neighbour must be confusing her with another lady. Bless Mrs. Mather's soul; a parent ought surely to be allowed to know how many children she possessed. There was Tommy, the eldest, next Ethel, next Walter, next Gracie, and then Hubert, then—— Mrs. Mather, with a gesture of self-reproof, begged to apologise. The neighbour was correct. Mrs. Mather admitted she had overlooked the baby, and, whilst she thought of it, there was the little girl from Forty-eight who came in to mind the kid.

"You're a light weight, Scotter," said the Superintendent. "Up you go, and do your very best."

Scotter went up the escape, bending his head to dodge flames that were darting out from the second floor; up again, and disappeared. There was a crash there of something falling in; the helmeted men below gave a low whistle. That settled poor Scotter's game of billiards. That relieved him of any difficulty of knowing what to do with plain white and the red left in baulk. That meant a rare old scene later on, with Scotty's sweetheart coming round to the station.

"Another man up!" ordered the Superintendent.

The second was half-way up, and had been drenched by error, when Scotter reappeared at the top window. He had the baby in a shawl that was tied at his neck; in the left arm he carried a limp little girl; the crowd in the street roared "Hip-pip—hooray!" and Mrs. Mather cried warningly, "Don't stay up there; come down!"

"That makes your little lot complete, then," remarked the Superintendent.

"They're all here now," conceded the lady. "How I come to overlook the fact that there was one short is more than I can tell you. I'm sure it's very kind of this gentleman. When baby's old enough he must thank him."

"You all right, Scotter?"

"Yes, thank you, sir. Bit singed, but nothing to brag about."

The crowd lost all its good spirits so soon as the first engine was sent home, and folk told each other regretfully that there were no fires now as in the old days. The waiting horses had recovered breath and began to caper about to impress the crowd with a sense of their importance. People to whom news had come tardily ran up from Clerkenwell Road demanding to know the whereabouts of the fire, and, being told it was out, censured the County Council, their informants, and themselves. Two firemen were selected to remain in charge; the others, dusting knees and rubbing knuckles into eyes, waited for orders.

"Get off back, you lot. Scotter, you did uncommonly well. Just given your name to some newspaper men. Married man? Not yet? I was going to say, if you were, your missus would be proud of you."

The pace was good on the return journey, but not frantic, and Scotter was told by a dozen experts what to do to the burn on his left wrist. At the station they assisted him in the task of washing, and made a neat bandage; over cups of tea they went through the details of the fire, and extinguished it again. A move was made to the billiard-room.

"Spot white's turn," announced one, taking up position at the marking-board. "Plain white and the red both in baulk." Glancing

at the pegs, "Twenty-three plays forty-eight."

"You've got to buck up, Scotter."

He took careful aim. Sent his ball against the right-hand cushion; it went from this to the top of the table, across to the left, travelled down, and dropped gently into the right-hand lower pocket. Three deducted from his score.

"Don't know what's the matter with me," said Scotter despairingly. "Somehow or other, I can't do anything right to-day."

MEANS OF TRANSPORT

XII

MEANS OF TRANSPORT

THE indignation meeting occurred without any of the printed entreaties usually found needful in order to induce the public to arouse. It seems less strange that only ladies attended, for the sex is notoriously beginning to take an interest in public questions.

Mr. Woods, driving one of his own wagonettes, was talking to the two passengers secured at the railway station four miles off and giving them a short autobiography—"Begun to work, I did, afore I were twelve, I did!"—when he caught sight of the gathering and broke off to express amazement; he gave at once an emphatic but scarcely original declaration that if women secured the vote they would not know what to do with it. The passengers differed from this view, and Mr. Woods, anxious to secure their patronage for the return journey, hastened to admit that he had not had the time to study the question thoroughly. A

lady detached herself from the group and, holding her tweed cap on her head, ran across.

"Whatever's amiss, Jane?"

"It's a missis," she added, robbed of breath by indignation and hurry. "That Mrs. Jarrett, as she calls herself. She's been and opened some Tea Gardens."

"News to me," he remarked alarmedly.

"News to all of us. She ain't been here more than three months, and this morning there's playcards all over her place."

"Thought she seemed a nicely spoken person."

"You wait," said Jane threateningly, "until we begin to talk to her. She'll get what I call some home truths if she don't look out."

The passengers suggested mildly that their time was limited, and Woods, rendered silent by the extraordinary nature of the information, drove on to the edge of the forest, contenting himself by indicating on the way the cottage where his sister-in-law Jane resided. In the clouded diamond panes it exhibited shyly, as did most of the other cottages, a small card that whispered the word "Teas"; a few bottles of ginger-beer rested on the sill to suggest that the establishment had further resources. After the passengers alighted he drove around by the road that skirted the wood, checking

the horse slightly on approaching the house and lawn occupied by the new-comer. Tables had been placed, with striped cloths held by shining clips; a small marquee was being fixed in the corner. The neatly-painted board at the gate gave the title, "Forest Tea Gardens," adding sentences to the effect that refreshments of the best quality could be obtained at any hour—"Large Parties and Small Parties catered for; proprietress, Clara Jarrett." As Mr. Woods, unwilling to display curiosity, allowed his horse to go on, an automatic pianoforte started, with great vivacity, a waltz.

"Great thing is," announced Mr. Woods, speaking from his conveyance to the meeting as though he were a candidate for Parliament—"is not to lose your heads. Keep perfectly calm and cool, and everything'll come right in the long run."

"Question is, how long a run is it going to be?" demanded one.

"Provided," he went on, "provided that we all stick together, she can't last half-way through the summer."

"And meanwhile——"

"Meanwhile," interrupted Woods irritably, "you've got to make the best of it. Competition's bound to exist in this world."

"How would you like it, Mr. Woods, if somebody——"

"One matter at a time. Let's keep to

the question. What I want you to recognise is that you've got a true friend in me. I've no partic'lar objection to her; as I said just now to my sister-in-law, she always seemed a nicely spoken person, and I don't wish to do her any harm whatsoever. But there's no doubt at all in my mind that so far as we are concerned she's a interloper."

The women appeared to find the description too lenient. One announced vehemently that, before Mr. Woods came along, they had almost decided to go in a body and pull down the signboard, demolish the marquee, and in other ways convey the fact that they looked upon the new Tea Gardens with disapproval. Goodness knew, there had never been much profit made out of sixpenny teas; it seemed likely that in the future it would be scarcely worth while to make cakes and keep the kettle boiling. Woods, again begging for moderation, urged they should cease talking for the space of two seconds and listen to him. He, with his cabs and wagonettes, had full control over all the traffic from the station, excepting that small part which took the (as he thought) mistaken course of deciding to walk. Nearly all of these passengers put one inquiry to him or to his men.

"Now do keep quiet until I've finished," prayed Woods. "Only got half a dozen more words to say, and I'm done."

He, on his side, was prepared to guarantee that the new Tea Gardens should never, by speech or hint, be recommended. If any passenger, having heard of them, mentioned the name, then Mr. Woods or his men could be relied upon to cast discredit ingeniously without bringing themselves within the domain of the laws of libel. On their side, they must be prepared for some special efforts; must make a greater show; endeavour to engage the passing visitor by welcome smiles; take care to keep windows open. He feared they did not always realise the Londoner's partiality for fresh air.

"And," asked his sister-in-law defiantly, "are we supposed to keep on friendly terms with her whilst all this is going on?"

"Please yourselves," replied Mr. Woods generously. "So far as I'm concerned, I shall continue to pass the time of day."

"And go on bringing her illustrated newspapers, I suppose, from the station?"

"You'll allow me, Jane, to be the best judge of my own affairs."

"But you're setting out to be the best judge of ours as well!"

"I've given you good advice," said Mr. Woods, gathering the reins, "but it's beyond human power to compel you to take it."

Confidence in himself was shaken by information conveyed by the two passengers on the return journey. Having forgotten the

exact whereabouts of his sister-in-law's house they had gone into the new Tea Gardens, and their content and satisfaction with the treatment received made subject of conversation throughout the journey. The excellence of the watercress, the surprising freshness of the eggs, the admirable quality of the home-made jam—all these impressed them favourably, and they talked of arranging with friends a picnic on a large scale and without the inconvenience of heavy baskets. Mr. Woods, not being asked for an opinion, gave several; one was in favour of splitting the party up amongst the cottages. He declared this plan would encourage sociability and give an insight into country life. For almost the first time in his professional career Woods found himself told to mind his own business. He invented some compensation by speaking sharply to one of his men whom he charged with the offence of keeping hands in pockets.

The members of the home syndicate received such a quick succession of blows from the new Tea Gardens that they began to experience a kind of dazed resignation, and it became the duty of Mr. Woods to order them to awake. The automatic pianoforte was followed by engagement from town of two young nieces, who were not content with demure costume and long blue pinafore, but must needs, if you please, wear a rather

attractive lace cap. After this came a large rocking-horse for the pleasure of children, or, failing children, the content of grown-ups who fancied equestrian exercise and wished to promote digestion. After this, a giant's stride. After this, a skittle-alley which drew away of an evening many of the best and most regular customers from "The Running Stag." After this, a lawn-tennis court, with rackets and balls provided without charge to those who had taken the shilling tea. It was in regard to the shilling tea that Woods's sister-in-law, ignoring him, went direct to the vicar, from whom she received the disappointing information that the words "ad lib." were not, in themselves, offensive, or calculated to undermine the morality of the village; he added some trenchant remarks concerning the duties of parents, which Jane assumed to refer to other ladies. Jane assured the vicar that she did all that was possible in the distribution of good counsel, and he remarked that it would make a useful change for her to vary the method by accepting it. So far as Mrs. Jarrett and Sundays were concerned, she and her nieces came to church in the mornings; they worked hard in the afternoon, and they rested in the evening. The vicar, admitting that he might be considered either very old-fashioned or very new-fashioned, declared this a good manner of spending the day, and gave a short account

of Sundays in the early part of the seventeenth century. Woods, to whom this was reported, said, guardedly, that the events referred to occurred before he came to town.

The fly-master had, at this period, troubles of his own which increased his interest in regard to the rivalry in the tea trade. The first news came from one of the nieces back from a visit to town on an occasion when Woods, at the foot of the hill, stepped down to walk and encourage his horse. The detached position which he had assumed since the beginning of the dispute had been modified because Jane's daughter told one of his young men (and the young man told Mr. Woods) that Jane had announced an opinion to the effect that her brother-in-law found the money to finance the Tea Gardens, a suggestion so unfair and so preposterous that he declared his intention of allowing them to fight their battles without further assistance from him; henceforth, he proposed to take up a strictly impartial attitude. Consequently, he had recommenced the bringing of illustrated newspapers, and more than once he and Mrs. Jarrett discussed impending marriages in high life, conduct of the German Emperor, accidents caused by motor-cars, and other topical subjects. The niece, taking charge of the roll of journals, had distributed amongst the passengers some of Mrs. Jarrett's neatly printed cards, had pointed out to them

a notable church and conspicuous dwellings. Leaning over the side of the conveyance, she gave the information already referred to.

"You Londoners will have your lark," he commented. "Your aunt's just the same."

"But I'm serious."

"You don't take me in. When you say you're serious is jest when you're trying to chaff."

"They told me so up at Paddington, at any rate," she declared. "Friend of mine is in one of the head offices, and he assured me it was a positive fact."

The two held further conversation as the horse, arrived on the level, jogged on again; she held the reins whilst he noted in his pocket-book some names and addresses which remained in her memory. Woods, greatly disturbed, had to be reminded by her, when the destination was reached, of the formality of collecting fares.

Within the space of a fortnight confirmation came. Down at the railway station small posters were exhibited, and quite a crowd assembled to read them and to chaff Woods on the disaster awaiting him, it being a notorious fact that nothing so much cheers A, B, C, and D as to discover that E is on the edge of calamity. On blank walls along the route the bills appeared. At Mrs. Jarrett's Tea Gardens—this proved the most stinging smack—a new board was erected bearing the words:

"TERMINUS FOR MOTOR OMNIBUSES."

Woods, with a set face, ordered the full strength of his stables to assemble at the station on the first morning to meet the train due just before eleven. The flies and wagonettes took up position; the large new omnibus, on rushing up with uniformed driver and boy conductor, found itself obliged to be satisfied with a place near the cloak-room entrance. As passengers came out Woods and his men attacked them much in the way that highwaymen would have behaved a hundred years before.

"Sixpence all the way!" they shouted. "Here you are, lady! Cheaper than the motor! Here you are, lady, sixpence all the way!"

Perhaps the fierce onslaught was an error in tactics. Perhaps it would have been wiser not to draw attention to the presence of a swifter mode of conveyance. Perhaps the natural independence of Londoners induced them to consider before coming to a decision. A messenger sent to the new omnibus returned with the news that the fare was eightpence—fourpence cheaper than the old fare, but obviously twopence dearer than Mr. Woods's new tariff.

"Oh, it's worth it!" cried young ladies. "Do let's go by motor. We shall get there ever so much quicker."

Woods likened them, rather bitterly, to sheep. On the two first passengers clambering up to the outside seats the others made a quick rush to secure the remaining places; the inside was filled by those who did not wish to separate from friends, and the new omnibus, after half a minute of irresolution that almost induced Woods to believe in the efficacy of prayer, flew away through the station gates and up the main street of the village, and away out of sight. His men gathered around Mr. Woods and prophesied a breakdown; made recommendations. He ordered them to do nothing but obey orders, and went off to sulk in the smoke-room of the Railway Hotel.

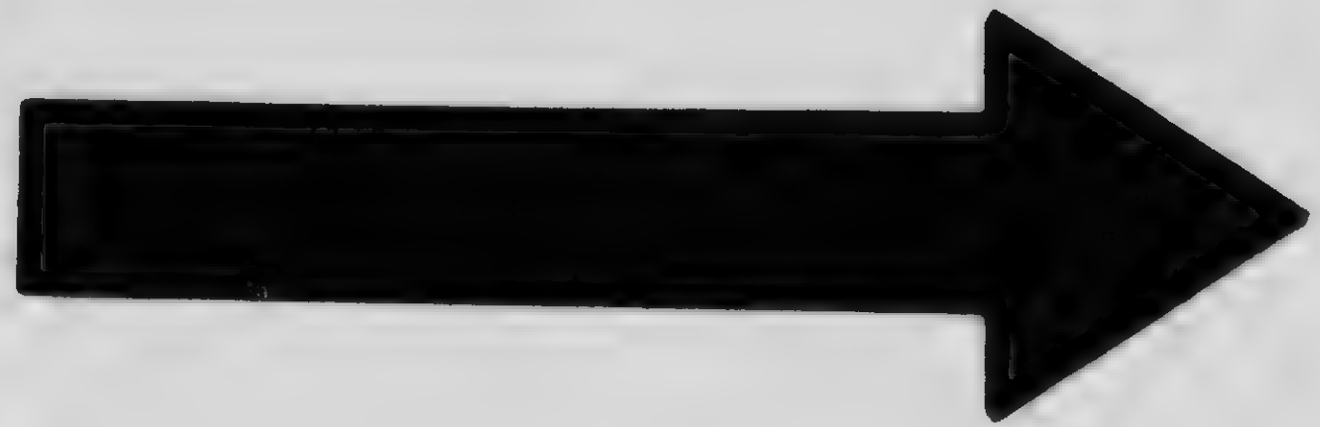
From which tent he was summoned an hour and a half later by a constable of the town, who said definitely:

"Mr. Woods, sir, this won't do."

"Go away!" commanded the fly proprietor irritably; "I don't want your sympathy."

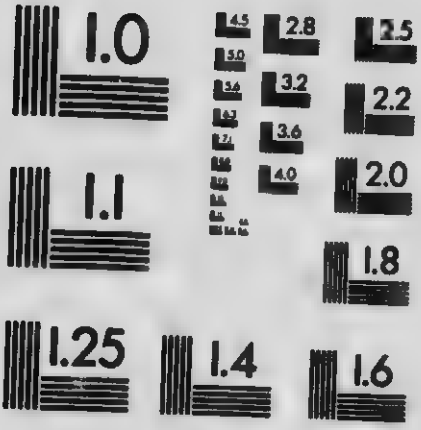
"It isn't sympathy I'm giving, it's a warning. If you don't call your men off, we shall end in a riot."

Woods delivered an address after the second motor-omnibus had been allowed to leave the yard with its passengers. The early part of the speech was of an intimate nature and described the treatment to be served out in the case of the staff again disregarding instructions; the punishments ranged from



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skinning alive to instant dismissal. In the second part, he ordered one to run up to the signwriter in the village. Later, the procession of flies and wagonettes left the station bearing notices, "Ruined by Unfair Competition," and Woods had the satisfaction of noting that shopkeepers on the line of route came out to inspect; this would have proved more comforting if they had given any additional signs of interest. The procession went at a gallop on noting that away in the distance the second omnibus had stopped, with driver and conductor busy at the front, passengers looking over anxiously. Mr. Woods counted it as part of his luck that as the first wagonette arrived the new conveyance re-started. When, farther on, a man walking shouted an inquiry regarding cats' meat, he found it difficult not to make use of the whip.

The Tea Gardens had flags waving at the entrance and along by the hedge in honour of the occasion; a photographer was giving considerable attention to the task of securing a good picture of the motor-omnibus with Mrs. Jarrett and her nieces at the side. The artist said, "Now, please!" and at that moment the horse driven by Mr. Woods became unmanageable, causing the ladies to cry, "O—ah!"

When the animal regained self-control, Woods mentioned that it was no doubt wise to obtain the photograph ere anything amiss

happened to the new conveyances. The motor-man demanded to know what was meant by this. Woods replied that he always meant what he said. Motor-man, temper already acutely tried, declared it would be a keen pleasure to punch Mr. Woods's nose. Woods retorted that this job required the complete abilities of a man, and was not therefore within the power of the omnibus-driver. The other took off his reefer jacket, ordering the conductor to take charge of the garment; Woods, forgetting his recent disapproval of militant tactics, laid his hat on the grass at the side of the road. At the first blow, Mrs. Jarrett ran forward crying:

"Oh, you mustn't hurt him! You please mustn't hurt him!"

"I'm not going to hurt him, ma'am," said the flushed and excited Mr. Woods; "I'm only going to kill him."

"It isn't him I'm nervous about," she wailed; "it's you!"

Woods put on his hat, looked around in a dazed, sheepish way, and, with a jerk of his head, ordered his men to follow him back to the stables.

"No," she said appealingly; "I don't want you to do that."

"Well, but," he argued, "what else is there to do? I'm prepared to listen to anything reasonable. Especially," he added, "coming from you."

They consulted apart, the nieces and the men and a few villagers looking on eagerly, and evidently wishing that their powers of hearing were finer. Woods, pinching his under-lip, said he doubted whether there was anything in the idea, but he felt willing to give it a trial. And did she—lowering his voice—did she really mean what she said just now? Mrs. Jarrett, pleating her apron, urged it was unfair to make any one responsible for a remark made on the spur of the moment, and re-stated her suggestion. One of the nieces fetched an inkstand, and, the cards being reversed, with a sharpened piece of wood she wrote upon them:

"AN HOUR'S EXCURSION THROUGH THE FOREST.

ONE SHILLING."

"Put the nosebags on!" he commanded.

It was on the evening of that day that the earthquake, faintly hinted at near the railway station, broke out in another place. The wagonettes had been fairly well patronised. A few couples, down with the announced intention of enjoying a good long walk through the forest, changed their minds and accepted carriage exercise as a substitute. Woods, before going home, shook hands with the ladies, and pointed out that every-

thing in this world dried straight if you only gave it time and fair weather. The motor-driver on his last journey brought, as a peace offering, two cigars presented by a grateful passenger. One of these Mr. Woods was smoking near the stables as he waited for his housekeeper's summons to the evening meal: she was a good woman, honest and religious, but apparently had never learned to tell the time by the clock. He was, I say, smoking; he was also thinking —a frequent conjunction.

When a tremendous clatter and h ub came, arousing him, and causing him to say distractedly:

"Whatever fresh is a 'appening of now?"

Out in the roadway a set of a dozen women, including the most notable female inhabitants of the vill marched, his sister-in-law at the head, banging as they went on dustpans, old teatrays, saucepans, and other instruments of music rarely to be discovered in a first-class orchestra. The aim seemed to be discord, and that end was certainly being achieved. Some children followed, making a cloud of dust as they slouched along. The marchers disappeared. Woods, regarding them as they went, knew the incident to represent a violent outbreak of moral indignation, and reckoned it a good answer to the complaint made by an American that day to the effect that English country life

appeared dull. His housekeeper came, announcing, with a severe air of promptitude, the readiness of a meal that was three-quarters of an hour late, and appeared willing for conversation; but he told her he had enjoyed enough of talk. What he desired now was peace and quietness.

Consequently, news only came to him at six in the morning when his men arrived at the stables. Having gathered the fact that Jane had locked her daughter out the previous evening, he left them at once and ran across to his sister-in-law's cottage: there the dogged, sulky, half-dressed woman refused to share responsibility for her actions with any one, and he expressed, not for the first time, an earnest wish that his brother had been spared. He hurried agitatedly down to the Tea Gardens, where Mrs. Jarrett was whitening, at this early hour, the steps.

"It's all right," she said, rising. "Fancy you catching me like this, with my hair in curlers! The girl came here last night, and we hadn't gone to bed because of the noise."

"The noise going by?"

She swallowed something. "No, stopping here."

Woods expressed a desire to engage in the wholesale trade of breaking necks.

"And I let her come in, and if her mother doesn't want her back, why, she can stay here."

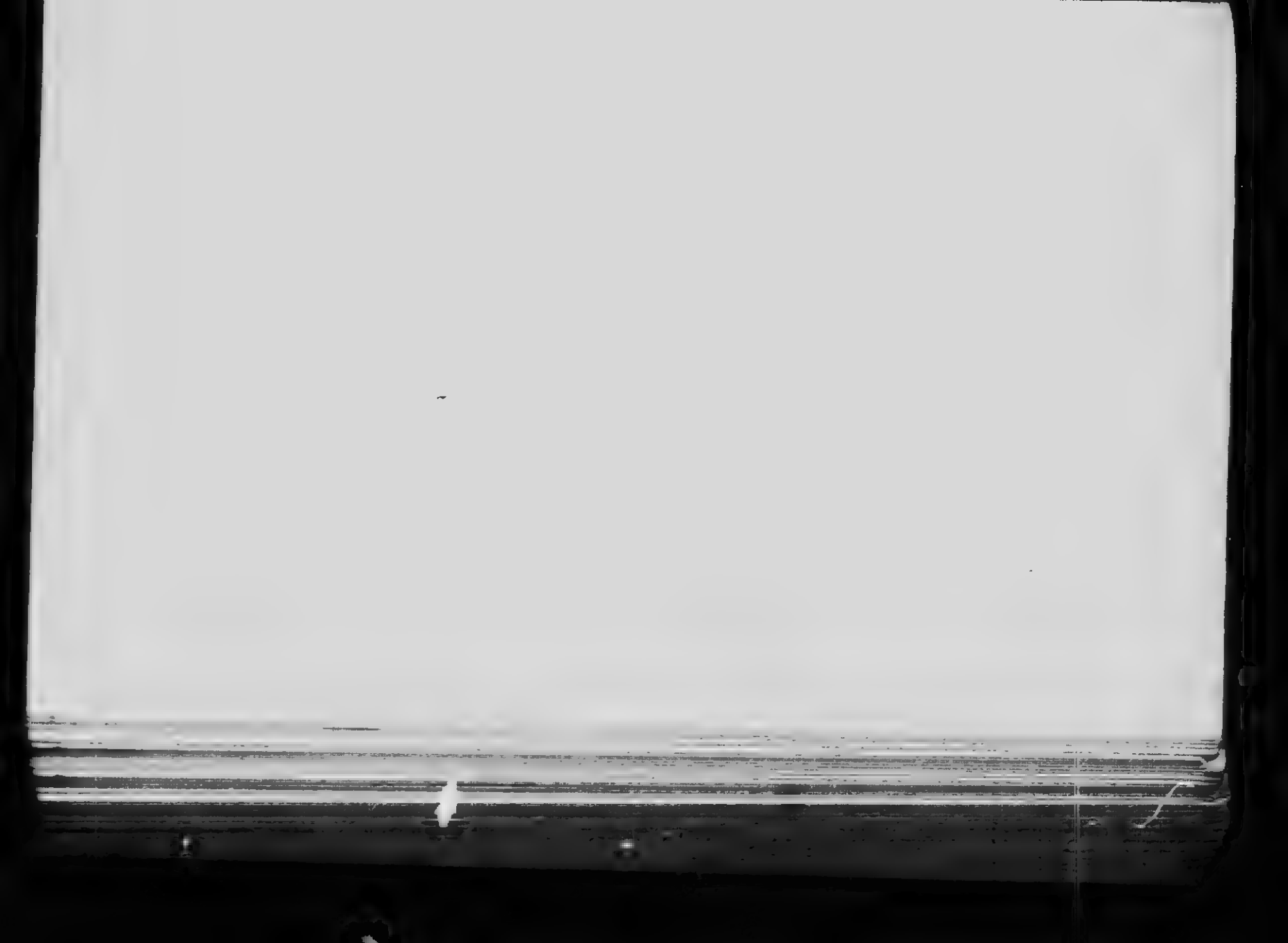
He glanced up at the signboard.

"Clara Jarrett, proprietress," he said deliberately, "you're the best little woman I've ever come across as yet, and if you think I shall make a pretty fair sort of a husband I wish you'd just say the word."

"It's a pity, dear, about the motor-omnibuses," she remarked later.

"Wrote off last night," said Mr. Woods, with the wink of a business man, "to buy some shares in the concern!"

IRENE MERCER



XIII

IRENE MERCER

THE general feeling was that Jane would be more convenient, that Mary made less demand on the brain, that Ellen had the advantage of having been the title of her immediate predecessor, but she proved stern and adamant in regard to the detail, and the graceful thing to do was to give in for the moment with a secret promise to make an alteration later on. When the time came for revision, it was found that no other title but that of Irene could possibly be given. The name fitted as though she had been measured for it. An impression that it could only belong to stately and slightly offended young women on the pages of sixpenny fashion journals, vanished.

"Previous to me coming here," Irene sometimes explained in the minute and a half given to conversation whilst clearing breakfast, "I was in a business establishment. Two year I put in there, I did, and then my 'ealth give

way. Otherwise I should never have dreamt of going into domestic service. I've been used to 'aving my evenings to myself!"

By chance, it was ascertained that the time which elapsed after leaving school had been devoted to a mineral water manufactory: this discovery reflected no credit upon any of the boarders, being indeed the result of a chance remark made by her on seeing a two-horse cart belonging to the firm go through the square. A closer reticence was shown in regard to her family; Irene did, however, convey, at times, a hint that the members had seen better and more prosperous days, and that distinguished ancestors would betray signs of restlessness did they become aware that she occupied a position that brought in but £12 a year, giving freedom only on Thursday evening and alternate Sunday afternoons. "But we never know what's in store for us," she remarked, with a touch of fatalism. "It's all ordained, I suppose. What I mean to say is, everything's planned out, only that we don't know it. Just as well, perhaps."

Her appearance in the earlier days gave no signal of noble birth. She wore the corkscrew curls fashionable in her neighbourhood, and her efforts in hairdressing ceased at about half-way to the back of her head; the rest being a casual knot insecurely tied. Many things go awry in this world, but few were

so unlucky as Irene's apron, which appeared to be the sport and play of chance, going to various points of the compass, sometimes becoming fixed due west. She seemed to have a prejudice against safety pins. With her, hooks and eyes lived indiscriminately, and never as precise, well-ordered couples. On first assuming the white cap (against the use of which she made desperate opposition), she wore it rakishly over one eye, and being reproved, answered lightly that this was one of those matters which would be forgotten a hundred years hence. A girl more completely furnished with the easy platitudes that turn away wrath surely never existed. In generous mood, she gave them away by the dozen.

"One 'alf of the world doesn't know how the other 'alf lives; it's a poor 'eart that never rejoices; there's none so blind as them that won't see; a bird in the 'and's worth two in the bush; and that's all about it!"

You must not assume that Irene gave up a large amount of her time to conversation. She started work at twenty to seven in the morning, and if half-past four in the afternoon found her ready (in her own phrase) to pop upstairs and change, she counted she had scored a victory. After tea came duties of a more leisurely nature such as ironing, and later still—if luck favoured—a brief opportunity for the study of literature, from which she came in such a dazed, confused state of

mind, that for the subsequent twenty minutes she could only give answers that possessed a conspicuous amount of incoherence. Those who have seen her with a number of "The Belgravia Novelette" report that her lips moved silently as she read the lines, that her features indicated, unconsciously, the emotions affecting each character: when a lady had to reject the advances of some unwelcome suitor (a frequent occurrence in the world of fiction where Mr. A., liking Miss B., finds this converted into ardent love when she announces she hates him with a hate that can never die), then Irene's face showed stern and uncompromising decision: when a landscape artist proclaimed an affection he had hitherto concealed, her eyes half closed, and her head went gently to and fro.

It is likely the pictures which accompanied these agreeable stories had some influence, although the fact that the people always wore evening dress prevented Irene from imitating every detail. The corkscrew curls, brought forward at each side of the face from a definite and decided parting, were brushed back. Irene was observed one night at about eight, on her return from commissariat duties in connection with next morning's breakfast, staring earnestly at the head which, in a window, revolved slowly, vanishing and re-appearing with a fixed, haughty smile. A youth came up and made some remarks.

"Don't you address conversation to any one what you haven't been introduced to," she ordered, warmly.

"Carry your parcel for you?"

"Thanks," replied Irene, "but I don't want to lose it."

The youth, declining to take this as a repulse, followed, and Irene's mistress reproved her for entering the house at the front door when the area gate was open. The very next day a fresh and daring experiment was made by fixing a white collar around the neck, and this was succeeded in the evening by a pair of cuffs. She seemed pleased with the general effect, and hastened to answer some knocks and rings at the front door instead of compelling every caller to repeat the summons. One of these she received with great curtness.

"No, the name don't live here."

"Beg pardon!" said a youth's deep voice. "Perhaps I've got it wrong."

"Quite likely. Judging from your appearance."

"Doing any shopping to-night, miss?"

Her mistress appealed to her by name, and she closed the door, explaining a few minutes later that she could not help feeling sorry for the poor fellows who had to sell combs and hair-brushes; at the same time, they had no right to annoy people who had work to do beside answering knocks. Later, her mistress

asked her to refrain from singing. Irene's voice would never have taken her to the concert platform, but her theory of music was so excellent that it may be worth while to give some particulars here. When affairs of the world went crooked, with her mistress temporarily short in temper, streets becoming muddy directly that the front step had been whitened, disaster on the stairs with a breakfast tray, then Irene selected airs of the cheeriest description, bursting into :

> "When Jones, my friend, came round to me,
> He said, 'Will you go on the spree?'
> I answered 'Yes, of course I will,
> That is, if you will pay the bill.'"

and other songs of a rollicking nature. On the other hand, when the world went smoothly and nothing happened of a contrary nature and her mistress had given her an egg with her tea, then Irene's voice came lugubriously up from the basement :

> "Oh I ne'er shall see my loved one any mower,
> For I'm leaving her and Britain's gallant shower,
> Though my tears are gently falling, yet I hear
> her voice a-calling,
> But I ne'er shall see my loved one any mower."

Changes had, as mentioned, been coming over the girl, but they proved more obvious at the period when the young man referred

to adopted the procedure of waiting outside the house of an evening, sometimes offering three stamps with the foot, sometimes giving a whistle, sometimes playing on the railings a mandoline solo, sometimes, after a wait of three-quarters of an hour, affecting in an ostentatious way to leave—when all other plans had failed—and bringing Irene up the steps of the area at a run, and with a call of "Hi!"

The interesting detail about the acquaintance was the perfect and complete decision arrived at without delay, by Irene. Other girls, in like case, would probably have assumed an attitude of indifference in speaking of their young man; might have suggested that they would require much persuasion before consenting to give their hand; would certainiy have conveyed the impression that the capture of their heart was a task not easily effected. Irene, from a fortnight after the meeting outside the hairdresser's shop, made no attempt to hide the fact that she fully intended to marry Mr. Easter. I have often wondered whether he made a formal proposal, or whether it was assumed on both sides that this could be taken for granted: there are some matters on which one cannot interrogate a lady, and, if she does not give the information spontaneously, the particulars have to be guessed. In other respects, there seemed no reason to complain

of want of candour. Irene chaffed herself quite openly. If she forgot to furnish a cup and saucer with a spoon :

"That's the worst of being in love!"

If she omitted to place the toast-rack on the breakfast table :

"Sooner I get married and settled down the better for all parties!"

Irene, on the Sunday afternoon when he proposed to take her for the first time to see his people, started out looking like a composite photograph, for every lady in the boarding-house, from her mistress in the basement upward, had made some loan or gift, and many of the adornments had a familiar appearance. No one could blame her for opening the striped parasol, although the sun was absent ; a muff carried by the other hand and wrist showed that no weather would find her unprepared. Young Easter stood at the corner of the first turning, and, in his case, a necktie showed a vivacious spirit of adventure. A row of white caps watched from area railings as they met, noted that a bowler hat was lifted, polite offer to carry the muff, consultation regarding the method of conveyance. They went off arm-in-arm, Irene tripping in the effort to keep step, and any one, starting out five minutes later, could have followed the scent, and tracked both to the destination by the combined odour of lavender-water and eau de cologne.

"Oh yes," reported Irene, the next day, "I can always make myself at 'ome with strangers. The old lady—his mother—seemed inclined to be a bit stand-offish at the start, but I said something pleasant about the jam and after that—well, you can generally get over 'em with a little artfulness. Tact is everything in this world. Besides, civility costs nothing. At any rate, he seemed satisfied."

A new independence of manner appeared, but only on Friday mornings, and this was probably due to the increased conceit effected by young Easter's compliments of the night before. Her curtness towards messengers from shops on these occasions was painful to regard: postmen offering remarks as she knelt at the steps in the early hours went on with the abashed air of those who have incurred severe reproof.

A dramatic shock came when the month's notice had nearly expired, that must have reinforced the girl's confidence in "The Belgravia Novelette," and its amazing habit of altering the situation by the wave of a fairy wand. She made a slight blunder by reading the letter without any exhibition of an agonised mind, but a moment's consideration remedied this, and, if all I heard was true, she eventually overdid the tragic intensity required.

"Oh heavens!" she murmured brokenly. "Oh my! Oh dear! Has it come to this?

What is there to live for now? Oh! I think I shall go out of my mind!"

"Be quiet, child!" ordered her mistress, sharply. "You'll make yourself ill if you go on like this."

"Oh, go away and leave me to die. Oh, only leave me alone! Frank, Frank!"

"If you carry on in this fashion," declared her mistress, "I shall simply take you by the shoulders and give you a thorough good shaking. That's what I shall give to you, miss!"

"Read it, ma'am, read it, read it!"

Her mistress, having complied with this request, assured her that, so far as she could understand, the letter contained important news, but nothing to justify the hysterical outburst. Irene, recovering partial serenity of manner, explained, and the other, reading the letter again, admitted there was something in the girl's view, and that the fact of young Easter being taken into partnership by an uncle whose health was failing, might well result in the breaking off of the engagement; the two found common ground in condemning the variability of man, and the pernicious influence of success upon some minds. The girl gave a brief rehearsal of her share in the interview that was to take place that evening, from which it appeared that young Easter would have little to do but listen, to mumble ineffective excuses, to retire finally

carrying the knowledge that Irene would not now consent to marry him, though he should come to her on hands and knees.

"Let him 'ave it straight, I will!" cried Irene. "They can't play about and make a fool of me. May think they can, but I'll jolly soon let 'em know they've made a mistake. Shan't talk much, mind you, but what I do say will go right 'ome. Least said, soonest mended!"

It was expected she would return within twenty minutes after leaving the house; instead, ten o'clock struck as her knock came, and this was not her usual single knock, but represented the music of a triumphant dance. The fault for imagining disaster she imputed to her mistress, who seemed to lack the gift of comprehending a well and clearly expressed letter. Mr. Easter had no idea of backing out of the engagement; on the contrary, he wished her, in the new circumstances, to make some more elaborate investments at certain of the best shops in the neighbourhood, and this represented his uncle's desire as well as his own.

Irene's mistress tells me she had given up all thoughts and hopes of seeing her again when, being away in the north of London, and desiring to return with all despatch, she managed by standing in front of a conveyance to stop it. Passengers on the left reluctantly made room: the young woman next to whom

she sat begged pardon coldly, and carefully shielded skirts. Recognition came.

"What a very small world it is!" said Irene, in a high voice. "How most extraordinary you and I should run across each other again! And tell me," condescendingly, "you are getting on pretty well? So glad! What a great convenience these motor omnibuses must be to poor people; I suppose you often travel in them. Do you know, I couldn't get a taxi when I wanted one just now, couldn't get one for love or money. My husband will be so annoyed when I tell him about it. I get out here. Three At Homes to go to. Goodbye!"

YOUNG NUISANCES

XIV

YOUNG NUISANCES

THE three had done nearly everything forbidden by the company's notices, and as the train slowed in order to stop at a junction, they expressed a fierce determination to reserve the compartment for the rest of the journey. If any one touched the handle they would fetch him (or her) such a rap across the knuckles as wouldn't make him (or her) half scream. They were still discussing plans of defence when the train came to a crowded platform; the three rushed to the door and side windows, shouting an assurance that there was no room, that the door was locked, that the compartment had been specially reserved. A short struggle, and determined travellers made their way in.

"Young hussies!" exclaimed a brown-faced woman wrathfully. "Never saw such impudence in all my life before."

"They come down," said another, "these yer London schoolchildren, and they kick up such a deuce and all of a shindy that everybody in the village begs and prays they'll never be allowed to come again."

"And the manners they learn our youngsters!" remarked a third. "The expressions! The sayings! The tunes!"

"The country's no fit place for 'em," declared the brown-faced woman emphatically. "I'm strongly in favour of every one keeping themselves to themselves. I've never so much as thought of going up to London myself. Sooner see myself dead and in my grave and buried, I would."

One admitted she went up twice a year, but pleaded, in extenuation, that she had a sister in service at Highbury, and invariably brought home enough small suits and dresses to enable her eight children to attract a fair amount of attention at the Congregational Chapel. Conversation went on to safer grounds.

"All finished?" asked the shortest of the three London children presently. The ladies sniffed and declined to answer. "'Cos if so, perhaps you won't mind if we say a word. We don't come here for a week's 'oliday to please ourselves; we don't come down here for the benefit of our 'ealth; we come down so as to brighten you up a bit, and give you a chance of——"

"Mixing with intelligent people."

"Be quiet!" she ordered to her companions. "Leave it to me." She addressed the women again. "To give you a chance of seeing what a lot of pudden-headed fools you are."

The passengers, trembling with annoyance, whispered a recommendation that no notice should be taken of these remarks; the brown-faced woman could not, however, refrain from hinting at a course of procedure which would be adopted were the child one of hers.

"The idea is this," went on the short girl, with the patient air of endeavouring to make a complicated matter clear to defective intellects. "You dawdle about every day of your lives, seeing nothing, 'earing nothing, doing nothing. You very seldom speak, and when you do you talk in such a peculiar style that you can't possibly understand one another. So the County Council comes to us and it says, 'Miss Parkes,' or whatever our name happens to be, 'sorry to trouble, but you'll shortly be taking your 'olidays, and will you be so kind and so obliging as to go down to such-and-such a place, and do all you can to liven it up. It's asking you a great deal,' says the County Council, 'but the Fund is very keen about it, and if you can spare the time, and if you've got the willingness, why,' says the County Council, 'we shall look on it as a great favour!'"

"'And make it worth your while,'" suggested her companions.

"I'll biff you two," she threatened, "if you can't keep quiet when I'm talking!"

"The daringness of the child!" exclaimed the rest of the compartment, amazedly and heatedly. "Don't believe there's a single word of truth in what she says! The trollops!"

"Facts are facts," she said, smoothing her brief skirt, "and it's very little use pretending you can get away from them. It's no pleasure to me to have to tell you all this, but it's only right you should know. As for us finding any satisfaction coming to these 'eaven-forsaken places——"

She laughed scornfully, and because her two companions did not join in this ordered them to wake up and sing something.

"If you do," threatened the brown-faced woman solemnly, "I shall most certainly report you to the guard at the next station. It's agenst the by-laws, and you can be punished for doing it. Punished well. My eldest boy is going on the line when he leaves school, and it stands to reason I know what I'm talking about. So you just dare, that's all!"

They allowed one station to go before beginning, and during the half-minute of rest there chaffed an official until he became scarlet with confusion. On the train re-starting, the

three lifted their voices to shrill music, singing a satirical melody with, for last line of the refrain, "Oh, what a jolly place is Engeland." This was followed by a song that caused the other passengers to gaze steadily at the roof of the compartment; the girls did not conceal their diversion at the sensitive nature of the country mind.

"What shall we give 'em next?" asked the eldest girl.

"Wait a bit and let me think," answered the youngest.

The women said that by rights Parliament ought to step in. If Parliament once decided that these common, vulgar children were not to be allowed, even once a year, to come down into the country and make themselves a nuisance, then it would be stopped. It only needed that Parliament should say the word. Parliament would have to be spoken to about it. Parliament busied its head concerning a lot of things which did not matter; but here was a subject Parliament might well tackle, and thus earn the grateful thanks of a nation.

"Let's give 'em," said the youngest, "one of them songs we've been learnin' at school lately. There isn't room, or else we'd do one of the Morris dances. That'd make 'em open their eyes!"

At the first verse the brown-faced woman put down her basket and gave all her atten-

tion. As the refrain began she unconsciously nodded her bonnet to the rhythm.

"'Where are you going to, my pretty maid?
Where are you going, my honey?'
'Going over the hills, kind sir,' she said,
'To my father a-mowing the barley!'"

"Why, do you know," she cried, "I 'ent heard that not since——"

"Order, there!" commanded the girl imperatively. "Some of you'll get chucked out if you don't keep quiet."

The last verse came to the deeply interested compartment:

"And now she is the lawyer's wife,
And dearly the lawyer loves her;
They live in a happy content of life
And well in the station above her."

The women clapped hands. One remembered her grandmother singing it years and years and years ago; another had heard it once and only once, at a Foresters' fête; a third had always recollected the air, but the words she could not have recalled though you offered her a pension. The London children, touched by the genuine enthusiasm, sang "Blow Away the Morning Dew" and 'The Two Magicians." The audience pressed apples upon them.

"You're never getting out here, my

dears?" protested the brown-faced woman. They assured her this was their destination. "Well, then," taking up her heavy basket, "dang it all—it only means a extra fower-mile walk for me—if I don't get out with you, just for the pleasure of your company!"

MY BROTHER EDWARD

XV

MY BROTHER EDWARD

THE case of my brother Edward is typical of many, and I set the facts down here, partly as reminder to myself, mainly for the information of the public. I said once, when in the company of some other bright spirits, that the pupils of yesterday are the teachers of to-morrow, by which remark I meant to convey that we learn in our youth, and in our middle age become, in turn, the instructors. Poor Edward had the same advantages that came to me in school days, the very same advantages. Our mother consulted us in turn; I, the elder, decided, without hesitation, to go into the City; Edward, a year later, suggested that he should go into an engineering place at Wandsworth, on the other side of the river.

"No, no," I said when I reached home that night. "This won't do at all. Choose a refined occupation. We don't want all Fulham to think that the sweeps are con-

tinually coming in and going out of the house. We may have our faults, but no one can say that we haven't always worn a clean collar."

"I'll keep mine for Sundays," remarked Edward.

"Mother," I went on, "please let it be understood that this is a matter which concerns me to some extent. Supposing I wished to bring home a friend from Bucklersbury, and supposing that just as I opened the front gate Edward came along. How should I be able to explain——"

"Say," suggested Edward, "that I was going in for Christy Minstrel business in my spare time. Say I was just off to St. James's Hall."

"I place my veto on the scheme"

"You can place whatever you like," he retorted, "and it won't make any difference."

"Very well," I said, "very well. In that case I consider myself relieved of all responsibility. I've done with it. Only, mind this, don't come to me in after years——"

"I promise that."

"And complain that I omitted to give you advice. Mother, you're a witness."

I put my silk hat on and went out of the house. I have always been willing to give people the benefit of my counsel, but the moment I find they cease to be receptive I—to use a vulgarism—dry up.

I discovered a certain amount of satisfaction in observing that events shaped somewhat in accordance with my prophecy. So soon as my voice settled down I was asked to join a Choral Union in Walham Green; and on the second evening, as I escorted two ladies in the direction of their home, I met Edward—Edward on the way from work, and presenting the appearance of a half-caste nigger. He raised his cap, and I had to explain to my companions that he was a lad to whom my people had been able to show some kindness, taking him in hand when he was quite young. Unfortunately, one of the ladies knew him, and knew his name, and I found it advisable not to go to any more rehearsals of "The Wreck of the *Hesperus*." Months afterwards, when I had left home and was living in lodgings owing to a dispute with mother about coming home late at night, he and some of his fellow-workmen arrived at the offices in Bucklersbury to fit up the electric light, which had then just come in, and I had to take an early opportunity of mentioning to him, privately, that if he claimed relationship with me he would be doing the very worst turn that a man could do to another.

"See you hanged first!" said Edward, taking his coat off to begin work. I turned cold at the sight of his shirt-sleeves of flannel.

"That makes it necessary that I should

appeal to your better instincts. I implore you, Edward, to remember that the ties of relationship can exist, but need not——"

"I mean," he explained, "that I'll see you hanged first before I confess to any one here that you are a brother of mine. Providing, of course"—here he threw back his head and laughed in a loud, common way—"providing the Governor of Newgate allows me to be present at the ceremony."

I felt greatly relieved at this, but now and again, while the work was going on in the office, Edward gave me a start by talking in an audible voice to the other workmen about his relatives, and I knew he did this purposely. What I feared was that his companions might speak to him by his surname; it proved reassuring to find that they called him Teddy. On the night they finished the work, I happened to be staying overtime, and, taking him aside, I tried to talk pleasantly to him, asking how he progressed in the new business to which he had transferred himself, and pointing out that a rolling stone gathered no moss, but he seemed quite off-hand in his manner. I offered him sixpence that he might go out and get a drink. He said that I had better keep it and buy something to put in my face; he added that I appeared to be spending all my money on clothes, and expressed doubts whether I had enough to eat.

"Pardon me, Edward," I said, "you are now trespassing on grounds that do not belong to you."

"A family weakness," he remarked. "Good-night, old man! Good luck to you!"

"Edward," I said, "it is not luck which counts in this world, but rather a steady, dogged determination to do one's duty; a persistent effort to keep one's position in society; to mingle, so far as possible, with those of a superior station in life."

"Do you know what I think of you?" he interrupted sharply. "You're nothing more nor less than—— Perhaps I'd better not say what I was going to say. After all, we're brothers."

"That, Edward," I said, in my quiet way, turning to go, so that it might finish the discussion—"that is a fact which I sometimes find it difficult to realise."

"You needn't try," he retorted.

On reflection, I perceived that, disturbing as this argument had been, there was no reason to allow it to cause regret, for it meant a final breaking up of friendship, and enabled me to find good plea for not acknowledging his existence should we ever meet again. Moreover, increases had been stopped in the office, and it appeared likely that I might remain at £110 a year for a time. Unless I could find some one of a

fairly attractive appearance, with a little money of her own, it would inconvenience me greatly to contribute anything towards the support of my mother. This difference of opinion with Edward provided me with a good answer if ever the application should be made. "After what Edward remarked to me some time ago," I should say, "I must decline to have anything to do with domestic expenses. He is living in the house: let him provide the sums necessary for the upkeep of the establishment." As it proved, no necessity existed for this statement, because they very wisely refrained from making any appeal.

I heard of Edward occasionally by the medium of Miss Charlesworth; she also brought me news of my mother. I was living then in Jubilee Place, and Miss Charlesworth's people kept a large dairy in King's Road, Chelsea. I called in sometimes on my way home for a couple of fresh eggs. Eggs can be carried in the pocket without observation, and, if folk are careful not to crowd, without damage, whilst other eatables have to be conveyed in a parcel. I had strong objections to be seen carrying a package of any kind.

Miss Charlesworth took music-lessons from my mother in the old days when there was not much money about, and I always spoke pleasantly when I called at the dairy, answering her when she asked whether there

was anything special in the evening papers ; I talked to her across the milk-pans, if I could spare the time, about Gilbert and Sullivan's new play at the "Savoy." Her mother beamed through the glass half of the door at the back, and on one occasion asked me to step in and have a bite of supper. I declined the first invitation, and this caused Miss Charlesworth's mother to become exceedingly anxious that I should honour them with my company.

"Fix your own evening," urged the old lady : "we're plain people, but we always keep a good table."

I found that, in the interests of economy, the plan, once started, answered very well. At first, when Miss Charlesworth's mother found that I walked into the shop-parlour nearly every night at supper-time, she exhibited signs of impatience, putting an extra plate down with a bang, and throwing a thick tumbler towards me with the word :

"Catch !"

But the attentions I paid to her plump daughter mollified her, and she always cried when I sang "The Anchor's Weighed." From Lily—one could but smile at the ludicrous inappropriateness of the name—I heard that my brother Edward had been foolhardy enough to start an electric light business on his own account ; and, in spite of the differences that had taken place between us, I could not help

feeling annoyed that he had omitted to ask my advice before taking such a step. It would be of no advantage to me for people to find the name of my brother in the list of bankruptcies.

I can never understand how it was that I allowed myself to be imposed upon by the Charlesworths. In the City at that time I had the reputation of being as keen as any one in the office, where my own interests were concerned; there were complaints that I shirked some of my duties, and that I often shifted responsibility from my own shoulders, but no one ever accused me of being a fool. These two women at the dairy-shop in King's Road, as nearly as possible, took me in. It hurt me very much afterwards to think of the time I had wasted. If I took Lily Charlesworth to one place of interest, I took her to a dozen; the National Gallery on a free day, the Tower, the outside of the Lyceum Theatre, the South Kensington Museum—any man, young at the time, and in receipt of a stationary income can fill in the list. Now and again she wanted to talk about my brother Edward; I changed the subject adroitly, for I could not trust my temper where he was concerned. It was near the Albert Memorial one evening (she had seen it before, but, as I said, it could do her no harm to see it again) that I directed conversation to the subject of profits made

on milk and cream, the discussion began at a quarter past seven, and the information I obtained was satisfactory enough to induce me, at twenty minutes to eight, to make a definitely worded offer.

"Very kind of you to ask me," she said nervously, "but I think my answer must be 'No.'"

"Come, come," I said pleasantly, "there's no occasion for all this coyness. We're friends."

"Yes," she said rapidly, "friends. That's just it. And there's no reason why we shouldn't go on being friends. But nothing more, please."

"That," I remarked, "if you will allow me to say so, Lily, verges on stupidity. I dare say you feel that you are not worthy of me."

"It isn't that."

"May I ask what other reason can possibly exist?"

"There are several."

"Give me one," I insisted.

"I think," she said deliberately—"I rather think I am going to marry your brother Edward."

I threw up my hands with a gesture of sympathy.

"You poor, silly girl!" I said. "What ever has induced you to think that?"

"Your brother Edward."

I turned away from her.

"It was because he asked us to be kind to you," she went on, "that me and mother took the trouble to look after you of an evening. It's kept you out of mischief."

"I suppose you're aware that he's marrying you for the sake of your money."

"Don't think he is," she replied. "I haven't got any."

"But you will have?"

"No!"

I must say this for myself: that I kept wonderfully calm, considering the trying nature of the circumstances. It appeared that, although her mother's name showed over the dairy, she was only the manager, working at a salary. I pointed out that this should have been mentioned to me before. She answered that Edward was acquainted with the fact, and there existed no reason why the information should be communicated to me.

I saw the uselessness of arguing the point, and left her to make her way home alone, congratulating myself on a narrow escape.

That night I wrote a rather clever letter to my brother Edward, the wording of which gave me trouble, but brought satisfaction; my only fear was that he might not have the intelligence to read between the lines. I said that I felt sure Lily Charlesworth would grow up to be the woman her mother was; he

would no doubt be as happy as he deserved to be ; I trusted it would be many weeks ere he discovered the mistake he had made. For myself, I had long since decided to remain a bachelor ; I hinted that the courage of the family appeared to have centred itself in him. Begged him to convey my best regards to my mother, and to express my regret that, on his marriage, I could not see my way to offering her a home.

Edward sent no answer to this, and he forwarded no invitation to the wedding. I should not have accepted it ; indeed, I had drafted out a satirical reply, but I do think he might have sent me a card. I transferred my custom to a dairy in Brompton Road ; and, at about that period, I spoke to a young lady in Hyde Park, mentioning that it was a fine evening, and that the days were drawing in.

I may say at once this lady became my wife. It is unnecessary also that I should delay the information that her account of relatives, of her position in society, and of herself, given to me during the days of courtship, differed to a considerable extent from the details proffered during our honeymoon at Littlehampton, and this made it easy for me to explain that one or two exaggerations had somehow crept into the particulars which I had furnished concerning myself. For one day, after this, we exchanged no word

with each other; and I have since been inclined to wish that she, at any rate, had continued this policy of silence, for, later on, she made remarks which (as I believe I pointed out at the time) proved her to be wanting in that fine and glorious attribute of women—the ability to forgive and forget.

"Suppose we must make the best of it," she said, "but I can foresee that the best won't be very good. And if ever I allow a day to go by without reminding you of what a bounder you are, then you can assume that I am going off my head."

She must have begun at once, for I remember that when I had struck some items off the bill, and settled with the Littlehampton boarding-house, the landlady told me that she had never found herself making such a mistake in the whole course of her existence: when we first arrived in the cab, she could have sworn we had not been married long; on retrospection she perceived that we had been man and wife for at least ten years. I told her we should never by any chance patronise her boarding-house again, and she said this assurance robbed the future of half its terrors. No doubt she thought she had had the last word, but she little knew the kind of man she was dealing with; I got the better of her later by recommending some of my economical friends to go there.

I mention all this because the incident is

typical of others which happened at about this time. At office I detected a disposition on the part of the firm to promote younger men over my head, and, when I insisted on knowing the reason, they fenced with me for some time.

"Fact is," said one of the partners at last, "you show no interest in your work."

"Make it worth my while, sir."

"We're paying you your full value. You wouldn't get more for your services anywhere else."

"I doubt that, sir."

"Quite easy for you to test the truth of the statement," snapped the partner.

"I suppose," I retorted, "that means you can do without me!"

"It means we are ready to try."

I told the wife when I reached home, and, after she had expressed some opinions concerning my conduct, she said that my best plan would be to write to my brother Edward, and ask him to use his influence in obtaining for me a new berth. I told her plainly that I would rather cease work for ever than feel myself under any obligation to him. When, after replying to several advertisements, it became clear that some exceptional step would have to be taken, I submitted an alternative for her consideration. To show what a difficult woman she was to deal with (and to throw a light on

much that happened afterwards), I wish to record that she went into one of her fits of temper, calling me everything but my proper name. Using diplomacy, I went away for a day or two, and on my return she told me she had decided to act upon my suggestion.

"Very well," I said; "but why not have agreed to it at first? However, it's satisfactory to see that you have come to your senses. Perhaps another time that we have a difference of opinion——"

"It won't happen again."

"I can't trust you," I said severely. "These promises of yours mean nothing."

"I assure you it won't happen again."

"We will leave it at that," I said. "What it all amounts to is this: that you are willing to go back to your former occupation as lady's-maid in a family."

"That's it!"

"In which capacity you will be able to earn enough to keep the home going."

"What home?"

"This home."

"Oh, no!" said my wife. "Oh, dear me, no! I shall earn enough to keep myself going, but I shan't bother about you. Understand that, once for all."

"Do you mean to look me in the face——"

"Sha'n't allow you a penny," she declared. "And if you find out where I'm

engaged, and call round and begin kicking up a row——"

"What then?"

"I shall simply come back again," she announced deliberately, "and make you keep me."

It must have been in consequence of this blow, administered by one who had sworn to love, honour, and obey me, that I began to lose heart. I went into a single room, on the other side of the water, and for a time became interested in political life, devoting myself more particularly to the Sugar Bounty Question. To my astonishment, I found that my brother Edward was paying some attention to a constituency in South London; as I remarked, rather cleverly, he appeared to have succeeded in the world as much as I deserved to do. It became my duty at one of his meetings to put a few searching questions to him. Some of his supporters objected, and cried out to me: "Who are you; who are you?" I shouted back that the candidate could give the information if he cared to do so.

"Oh, yes," said Edward; "he is my brother."

I spoke to him after the meeting, and he introduced me to a slim, good-looking woman—his wife. I remarked, in her presence, that he appeared to have found out Miss Charlesworth, as I had done; he replied

that he had not only found her out, but that he had married her. My amazed look caused Mrs. Edward to declare she had rarely received such a genuine compliment, and that it more than repaid her for the course of persistent exercise on which she had engaged. She added they had made efforts to discover me—I knew how much to believe of that—and exhibited surprise on hearing that I was married.

"We particularly wanted to find you," remarked my brother Edward, "about six months ago."

"Let me see," I said. "Where was I six months ago? Busy, I expect. What did you want me for?"

"Mother died."

"Wish I'd known," I said. "I would have sent a wreath. Got a cigarette?"

He turned away rather sharply, and then turned to me again. "She wanted to see you," he remarked. And they both gave their attention to some one else.

It occurred to me afterwards that they perhaps expected me to show more signs of distress; if I had thought this at the time I could have obliged them. But that trifling detail makes no excuse whatever for Edward's subsequent conduct towards me, conduct which has compelled me to write this account of his behaviour. I put it briefly, and I wish to add that I put it truthfully;

there may have been times in my career when it has been necessary to step with care beyond the confines of exactitude, but, in regard to this matter, I am telling you nothing that can be contradicted.

I wrote to him, you must know, immediately after the meeting, and offered to stop my opposition to his candidature, and to help him, heart, body, and soul, if he would allow me—say, two pounds a week. He replied curtly. I did not apply to him again for quite ten days, and then I wrote saying that, although he could not see his way to accepting my first proposition, perhaps he could let me have a loan. I said I was temporarily out of a situation, and that several excellent offers were being made to me.

To keep myself to the truth, I am bound to say that I obtained from him, at various times, amounts which, totted up, would come to a respectable figure.

Mark what follows.

This morning—this very morning—I receive a letter. Headed "House of Commons."

"I find," he writes, "that for some years past you have done no work of a creditable nature. I am always willing to help those who are making some effort to earn a living, but I do nothing for the indolent. I can give you no further assistance until you obtain work and show some clear intention of sticking to it."

Apart from the wording of the letter—inexcusable in one who had equal educational advantages with myself—I desire to point out the callousness of its tone; the disregard of family ties. I leave the matter for the world to judge. In the meanwhile, if you know of any one who can be persuaded to assist by spontaneous gifts, I shall not only be saved the necessity of looking for employment, but I shall be enabled to write a sharp, stinging note to my brother Edward.

SAVOIR FAIRE

XVI

SAVOIR FAIRE

"AUNT kept on saying I ought to bring her up to London with me." The perturbed lad examined closely the peak of his cap. "What the others seeggested was that I should get you to go down to Railway Terrace and argy it all out with my late landlady. One of the ticket collectors said there wasn't nobody on the station who could make himself so unpleasant as you, Mr. Swan, when you felt so inclined."

"I do my best," admitted Porter Swan.

"'Nother one recommended you should go down there and knock at the door and pretend to have had a drop or two too much."

"Why pretend?"

The new porter had endured a hard week; all the tricks of an inventive staff had been played upon him, and Porter Swan took a lively interest in these, prompting colleagues to further efforts. Now that young Mannering

arrived with his troubles and appealed for help, games were set aside.

"She's evidently a terror," admitted Porter Swan presently. "If you'd only come and asked me at the outset I might have told you where to go. 'Pon me word, I don't know quite now what to be up to!"

"If you don't," said young Mannering hopelessly, "then no one does."

"Why not go back and make the best of it for a while?"

"Mr. Swan," declared the youth tearfully, "I do assure you her chops are worse than her vegetables, and her vegetables worse than her chops. I was bound to leave."

"And you want your property, then, without paying too much?"

"I'd rayther get it without paying nothing at all."

Porter Swan went off duty at seven, having first washed with unusual vigour and changed his official headgear for the bowler hat of private life. Near the suburban station he bought a cigar, and, lighting it, strode towards Railway Terrace, rehearsing the coming debate on the way. At the door of No. 17 he gave a sharp, definite knock and frowned at some children who ran up to watch the course of events. He had to knock again, and this time also rattled the flap of the letter-box to express impatience.

"Well?" asked the trim, determined

woman at the open doorway. "What are you kicking up all this row for?"

"I don't want to make any unpleasantness, or any un-anything else," he began truculently, "but you've got a tin box belonging to one of our young men, and I have to request, ma'am, that you hand it over to me at your early convenience."

"Pay me his week's board and lodging, and you can take not only the tin box, but all that's in it."

"Goes against the grain," he said loudly, "to argue with a lady, but I ask you one simple question. Have you, since you've taken to letting, ever had a lodger that stayed so long as a month?"

"The last two," she replied calmly, "stayed until they got married."

"They must have had iron constitutions," he argued.

"Martha!" she called, turning her head.

"Yes, mother."

"Did you hear what this gentleman said?"

"Yes, mother."

"It's as well," she remarked to him, "to have a witness. Makes all the difference in a court of law." She found her handkerchief. "I've always made it a special boast that I never had to tell a lodger to go, and I do think it's hard——"

"Look here, ma'am," said Porter Swan, still in aggressive tones, "we don't want to

quarrel. We want to arrange this trifling affair in a nice, sensible, amicable way."

"If you're going to settle it," she said, "I'll go and make out the bill."

"Let me understand first of all," repressing annoyance. "What does your claim actually amount to?"

She mentioned the sum.

"And you've got the assurance to stand there and demand all that for keeping this young country lad for three days! Why, it's my opinion you're nothing more nor less than a female swindler."

"Martha!" she called. "Are you still listening, dear?"

Porter Swan went on to the house of his own landlady, where he complained with bitterness of the absence of a mat and the condition of the wallpaper; she soothed him with a cup of tea so excellent that it stood outside the pale of criticism. In his room he used the hair-brush with considerable fierceness, a process that seemed to arouse ideas, for after a few moments' consideration he changed his collar and fixed a necktie hitherto reserved for Sundays, Good Friday, and Christmas Day. Then he set out, whistling as he went, announcing cheerfully to his landlady that he would return in less than half an hour. If her husband came in, she was to beg him to stay up: Porter Swan would have something to relate to him. In Douglas

Street he purchased a threepenny bunch of chrysanthemums—all white.

At the door of the house in Railway Terrace he gave this time a deferential knock. The child answered it, crying to her mother that the man with the red face had called again. Swan asked the little girl whether she cared for flowers, and made a genial presentation.

"Sorry to trouble you once more, ma'am," he said, taking off his hat and throwing away the end of the cigar, "but I've come round to apologise. In the heat of argument I used one or two remarks I'd no business to use to any lady, and if you'll kindly dismiss them from your mind I shall esteem it a favour."

"Look what he's give me, mother," said the child.

"A sweet-faced little thing," mentioned Swan, gazing down at the youngster sentimentally. "I've often thought that if ever I did get married—— Only"—with a regretful shrug of the right shoulder—"I've never been lucky enough to find any one that cared for me. That accounts for my want of good manners."

"It is a bit noticeable," she agreed.

"It's partly, too," he contended, "the result of good nature. This young chap, he appealed to me to help him, and I, foolish like, consented to do my best. Never

occurred to me that I should be no use at all when I set myself against the sharpness of a woman. When a woman's got a clear head and a certain amount of good looks, no man has the leastest chance." He looked around the passage for a new subject. "Is this the late lamented, may I ask, ma'am?"

"That's Lord Kitchener," she answered, not displeased. "Would you care to come in and sit down for a bit? I expect you're tired, running about all over the place. Martha dear, you come in, too, and let us see how nicely you can arrange the flowers. That," entering the front room and pointing to a large, tinted photograph, "that was Mr. Rickards."

"Sensible sort of forehead," said Porter Swan guardedly.

"More than could be said of what was inside it. He was always talking about what he'd put by in the Railway Savings Bank, and every pay day he used to come home and say, 'It's adding up rapidly,' and 'You won't want for nothing, my love, if I should be took away.' And," with acerbity, "when he did go off, I found that instead of having about forty pounds there—enough to give me the chance of opening a little business—he hadn't put by as many shillings. Not as many pence."

"Some men are like that."

"All men are like that," she insisted.

"No, no, no!" protested Swan. "We've got our faults, but we haven't got the same kind of faults. Most of us are straightforward. How do you manage to rub along, ma'am, if it isn't a rude question?"

"It is a rude question; but I do dressmaking, and I take lodgers."

"You take in lodgers?"

She smiled, and Swan could not help thinking that only trouble interfered with her good looks. She sent the child to the scullery for a jug of water.

"Not for me," he insisted. "I shall have something with my supper, later on."

"It's for the flowers," as the child obeyed. "And I didn't want her to hear what I was about to tell you," she went on confidentially. "The fact is—— As you say, it has been an extraordinary autumn. The sun to-day was enough to make people's eyes ache."

"Ain't spilt a drop," announced the child, who had returned swiftly.

Swan moved his chair nearer.

"You've got eyes," he said, lowering his voice, "eyes like the head-lights on an engine."

She tried to frown, and gave a meaning glance in the direction of the occupied little girl.

"I shall be dreamin' of 'em for weeks," he whispered earnestly. "I'm not one to take much notice of females in a general way—

a woman hater; that's what they call me in the porters' room—but as I was going to say, I can quite well imagine a chap like myself, going on for years just racketing about and then coming across a pair of eyes like yours and saying to himself, 'Swan, old man, it's time you began to take matters seriously!'"

"Martha, my dear, go on with your work. Me and Mr. Swan are only talking business!"

"You must have been a decent-looking girl in your day," Swan went on. "Of course, time doesn't stand still with any of us, and very few can weather the storm, as you may say, without showing some signs of wear and tear."

"I've had more of a struggle than most," she said, glancing at the mirror.

"You want somebody to take you out for walks, and now and again an evening at the theatre. Sometimes I get pit orders for two, and I tear 'em up, because," said Swan, with a touch of melancholy, "simply because I can't get no one to go with."

"That is a shame!" she cried. "Surely your landlady——"

"You know what landladies are," he interposed. "Always on the make. So long as they can over-charge you, that's all they want. I don't mean anything personal," he added quickly, and rose from the easy chair. "It's

a fine moonlight night," he went on ; " I shall just take a turn round and get a mouthful of fresh air."

" I haven't been outside the front door to-day."

" I'll wait for you," he whispered, " a few houses off."

" Martha," she cried severely, " do you see what the time is? Pack off to bed this minute, and I'll come up and hear you say your prayers. Bid 'Good-night' to Mr. Swan, and thank him prettily for what he gave you."

" Bring a bigger bunch next time," said the child shrilly.

Swan, walking up and down on the pavement, was hailed by one or two colleagues on their way home, who asked to be informed whether he had succeeded in recovering young Mannering's box : he contented himself by replying to the effect that negotiations were in progress, and that a full report would be made in the morning. They predicted that he had for once bitten off more than he could chew.

" This takes me back," she remarked brightly, as she came up, " I shouldn't like to say how long. Wonder whether I can get your step? "

" You'll get accustomed to it," he replied. " Any objection to me smoking? "

" I love a pipe ! Oh, but," with sudden

agitation, "I didn't say you could take my arm! Whatever will the neighbours think?"

"They'll think what a lucky one I am."

"Mr. Swan, you seem to have an answer ready for everything!"

She announced half an hour later that she did not feel in the least tired, adding a belief that she could go on walking for ever; but Swan, who needed his supper, was firm, and at her door mentioned that he was early duty all the current week. She offered her hand and thanked him for his kindness; he held it and asked determinedly where and when could he see her again. Surely, she retorted, surely once was enough! Once, Swan announced, was by no means enough—twenty thousand times would not, in his opinion, be reckoned sufficient.

"You must think I'm simple to believe that!" she said.

"What about to-morrow?" he asked, ignoring the assertion.

"Would you care to come in the evening and have something to eat before the child goes to bed?"

Porter Swan, in a moment of inspiration, kissed her hand, thus striking the exactly right note, and she declared she seemed to have known him for years. Would Mr. Swan do her one favour?

"Command me!" he begged.

Would he mind taking that lad's box away

with him, and leaving it at the station or somewhere? The sight of it on the morrow would recall bitter words that she wished to drive from her memory.

"I don't mind obliging you," said Swan, feigning reluctance, "to that extent."

It had cost a deal of thought and of trouble, but good repayment came the next morning. He conducted Mannering to the Up Parcels Office, and there formally presented him with the tin box, sent free from the suburban station as "Luggage Left Behind." The staff of the Up Parcels Office cheered Swan, and, clustering around, begged to be informed how the feat had been accomplished, and had to interpret a wink given as reply. Porter Swan waved aside the lad's thanks, declined the grateful offer of refreshments, and walked out with the air of a successful diplomatist leaving the Guildhall after receiving in a gold casket the freedom of the City. During the day he found a new regard paid to him; colleagues came for private conference on knotty points of law, ranging from difficulties with a neighbour concerning cats to the regaining of engagement rings held by lady bailees. It was all very pleasant and gratifying, and, in order to enjoy it to the full, he gave less than his usual energy to the collection of tips, actually leaving one leisurely passenger without allowing her time to find her purse.

Not until a client, searching for sound

legal advice, and finding it impossible to state his case amidst the puffing and whistling of engines, inquired: "What are you doing with yourself this evening, old man?"—not until then did he recall the circumstance that he had promised to eat a meal on the occasion of his ensuing visit. He wanted to see her again—just once more, at any rate—and he knew domestic authorities were not too well pleased when disappointed in regard to a guest. To arrive after the supper hour would mar the warmth and geniality of his reception.

"Mannering!"

"Yes, Mr. Swan. Anything I can do for you?"

"Want a little more information out of you, my lad. You gave me a vague sort of description of the food that was given you at that last place; just let me have a few more details—the exact truth about, say, the last meal you had there."

As the lad complied Swan's forehead took an extra crease; young Mannering spoke with the fluency of one dealing with a subject on which he felt deeply.

"Steady on!" protested Swan. "It could 't possibly have been so awful as all that.'

"It was worse!" declared the other. "A jolly sight worse! At first it seemed all right; but the third day—— You ought to have been there! If you 'appen to have a

taste for tough meat—they say there's nothing like leather; but that's a mistake—overdone and all black at the edges, why, you would have enjoyed yourself!"

"She doesn't look like a woman who can't cook."

"She's a very nice person," agreed the lad judicially, "and I've got no other fault to find whatsoever. Horrible particular, though, about late hours. Old-fashioned and out of date, I call her."

"What do you mean," roared Swan impetuously, "by talking in that way about a lady? Keep a civil tongue in your head, will you? Who are you, I should like to know, to find fault?"

The lad begged for pardon.

"What do you know about food?" he raved on. "Accustomed to nothing but raw turnips hitherto, how can you possibly tell whether cooking is good or not? Be off and see about your work, or else I'll get you shifted back to that toad-in-the-hole station in the country. Coming up here," continued Swan aggrievedly, "and dictating to Londoners about food—I never heard of such impudence!"

He strode to the porters' room, and, flinging off his jacket, sat at the desk and took a penholder, assuming the attitude of mental stress common to those who start upon literary efforts. Like many others in similar position,

he found himself baulked at the very start. Should he, in writing to excuse himself from paying his call until after the hour of supper, begin, "My dear Madam" or "Dear Friend," or, his memory going back to the days of youth, dare to write "Sweetest"? He tried all of these, and others, and could not persuade himself to feel satisfied with any. The old remedy of shining boots gave him an idea that brought back contentment to his features, and he went about his tasks for the remainder of the day humming cheerfully. At six o'clock, he ran around to the eating-house near to the station and ordered a special eightpenny steak, with chipped potatoes.

"That'll save me!" remarked Porter Swan.

In marching down towards Railway Terrace he could not help thinking of his soldier days when there was never a dearth of housemaids, and never a one who did not, sooner or later, betray some defect which led to cessation of amiabilities. Here, again, was a case of a trim little woman who, if she but knew how to cook, might well be either highly commended or, perhaps, awarded the prize of second marriage. He had enjoyed his meal at the eating-house, and felt willing to look on the world with an indulgent air; nevertheless, he could not help seeing the drawback was serious.

"Hullo, my dear!" as the child opened the door. "How are we this time?"

"Brought me anythink?"

"What do you say to a few chocolates?"

"Mr. Swan," called a pleasant voice from the kitchen, "don't you go spoiling her. She's not been behaving nicely."

"Hand 'em over!" ordered the youngster.

The mother came through the passage, slightly flushed by the fire or from confusion, reproved her daughter for want of manners, gave a welcome to Mr. Swan, and expressed a hope that he had a good appetite.

"Don't know what's the matter with me," he replied anxiously. "If I don't get better I shall have to see a chemist. I could no more touch food at the present moment than I could swim the Channel. I'm very sorry, but you must excuse me, reelly."

"It's a pity," she said with distress. "You don't mind sitting down and watching us eat, I hope."

"That'll suit me," declared Swan, entering the room.

The table was neatly set out for three, with glasses, shining knives and forks, an attractive roll of bread at each plate. She went to the kitchen.

"We've got a fowel," whispered the child importantly. "Roast fowel!"

"You're welcome to my share," he answered.

This, repeated with some extravagance, caused the child's mother to stop as she came

in with the dish. She said "Oh!" in such a pained way that he hastened to assure her no reflection upon her culinary skill was intended; the internal complaint from which he was suffering had to take the responsibility. The child said grace.

"You're a first-rate carver," he said interestedly.

"It's a tender bird," she remarked.

"Looks to me as though it's beautifully done," declared the astonished Swan, his mouth watering.

"I was cook in a good family before I married my first," she explained. "If you've once learnt, you never forget. When I get a lodger who keeps good hours I take a pride in preparing his meals. When he doesn't, I know enough about cooking to cook so that he doesn't want to stop."

The staff subscribed threepences, and bought a fish knife and fork. Porter Swan sent in an application for leave, and for passes—passes for two: self and wife.

MAGNIFICENT REMEDIES

XVII

MAGNIFICENT REMEDIES

"DON'T want to bother you," remarked the toddling baby, catching the hem of the other's overcoat; "but if you could spare a minute!"

"Now, let me see," said the Deep Thinker, looking down sideways at the small child and giving the pull-up of the cuffs preparatory to the making of an arch with two hands. "Let me see, now. Where are we?"

"In Notting Dale."

"I mean, how far have we advanced? At what stage have we arrived?"

"Haven't arrived at all," answered the baby shortly. "I'm just starting, and it seems to me I'm starting in rather unfortunate circumstances. I'm not going to say anything against my father and mother; but, really, unless some one else steps in and——"

"Not so fast!" interrupted the Deep Thinker, taking off pince-nez and shaking it reprovingly at the child. "Let us consider this case of yours fully, in all its various

aspects. We must hasten slowly. I'm fully prepared to help you in every possible manner, and you can safely leave the case in my hands."

"Fire away, then!" said the infant.

The Deep Thinker, turning up the collar of his overcoat, found a sheltered space near the Sirdar Road schools, and opened the discussion, picking phrases so carefully that sometimes when the right word came first he rejected it, substituting one which represented second thoughts. The question to be decided—this he offered truculently as his humble opinion—was that nothing could be done for the Notting Dale baby until a large, momentous, important point received satisfactory settlement.

"Now, the Act of 1870, you will remember——"

The child protested that it knew nothing of events happening so long ago; the Deep Thinker lifted a warning forefinger as insistent demand for silence. Warming to the arguments, he began to wave arms, to adopt emphatic forms of gesture; the boy stood clear, watching, and endeavouring to follow the involved and tortuous reasoning. "Shall we," said the Deep Thinker, "or shall we not reimpose tests?" The youngster gave the sigh of one struggling to understand and unable to see light. "Ought we or ought we not to oppose with all the force and strength we possess undenominational religion; and,

if so, why?" The other muttered, "Because it's ajar!" and, turning, found a little pack of grubby cards in his pocket.

"We proceed now to consider the point of full popular control, and here is a subject on which I shall take the liberty of speaking at some length. It is a difficult point, and I beg you to give me your complete and absolute attention.

"That I jolly well sha'n't!" replied the other definitely.

It appeared an audience was not indispensable so long as the Deep Thinker could be permitted to talk without interruption; he found so much pleasure in the task that he gave a high giggle of satisfaction when, having set up a limp argument made of straw with the preface "But then my opponents will say——," he knocked it down and jumped exultantly upon it with "I rather think that answers the other side!" As time went on, he became slightly hoarse, and the other standing near (whose manners really seemed to be getting worse and worse) warned him that his throat would presently resemble a nutmeg-grater; the Deep Thinker took a voice lozenge, gaining from this enough refreshment to enable him to proceed. Public speakers can be divided into two sets—one not knowing where to begin, and the other not knowing where to leave off; it was evident to which party the Deep Thinker belonged, for when-

ever it seemed he was approaching finality and nothing remained but to take definite action, he always managed to discover a new and another branch on which he could perch himself and twitter.

"For each individual, after due consideration of the convictions of others, the final authority as to the right or wrong of any opinion or action should be his own conscientious and well-reasoned judgment."

Policemen came up and interfered between the lad and the girl who was suffering from his blows; the Deep Thinker, his attention distracted by the incident, begged the constables not to arrest the youth until the arguments that were being delivered should come to an end; and the two members of the F Division, touching helmets, went off reluctantly, taking good note of the features of the combative parties. The young man now made no pretence of listening. As quiet folk went by he made a snatch at their watches or at their purses, or at both, and when success attended his efforts he was absent for a time, returning with a slight hiccough and a flushed countenance.

He had developed during the discussion from a round-eyed, attractive infant to a bulgy, sullen youth with a shifting expression that never escaped aggressiveness. As the Deep Thinker announced that only a few brief words remained to be said, the youth temporarily gave up the task of incom-

moding his fellows, and offered a look of hopefulness.

"I am warned," said the Deep Thinker, blinking around, "that time does not stand still, and I propose therefore to put my remaining arguments into the briefest possible space. I flatter myself I am a man of action, rather than a man of words. The time has come to be up and doing. We must gird on our sword for the fray. The trumpet call is sounding, and it is the hour for coming to close quarters. First of all, however, I should like to run over the various heads of the arguments I have used, and freshen them, if I may say so—freshen them in your memory."

What the Deep Thinker meant by this proved to be that he should give himself an encore and accept it, for he went through the whole of his exhaustive address again, adding to it considerably here and there, and whenever he became involved in a thick undergrowth of words, laboriously retraced his footsteps and recommenced the journey. The lad, become a man, short and defiant, with a stubbly beard, made a very satisfactory haul from two well-dressed people, returning later with a revolver, that gave him a great amount of interest; the Deep Thinker broke off to urge him to be careful.

"The crux of the whole question," said the Deep Thinker, resuming, "put shortly is simply this. The moral life involves neither acceptance nor rejection of belief in any deity,

personal or impersonal, or in a life after death!"

Possibly the bearded man did not fully comprehend the intention of this remark; probable, too, that, having been talked to for a considerable length of time, his sense of appreciation had become dulled. At any rate, a City gentleman, hurrying home, found himself at his last destination sooner than he expected. The police wanted the Deep Thinker to come along to the station; his evidence as witness would be required, but the Deep Thinker assured them earnestly that, absorbed by a particular topic, he had seen nothing of the affair.

"Thus we see," went on the Deep Thinker, when they had disappeared, "that, whilst on the one side it may be fairly argued that——"

He had not finished when there occurred a shock that genuinely pained and annoyed him. The rate-collector presented a demand for payment of the Deep Thinker's share of the cost of keeping the Sirdar Road criminal in prison for the remainder of what was termed his natural life.

"Almost enough," cried the Deep Thinker aggrievedly, "to make a man threaten to give up completely his interest in public questions!"



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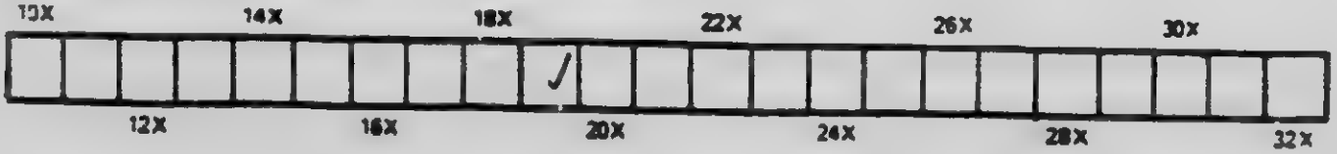
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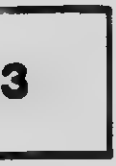
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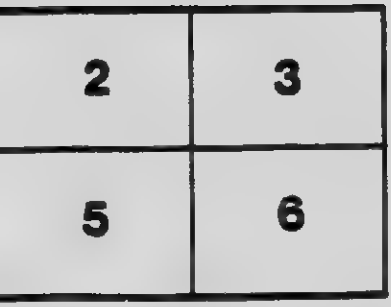
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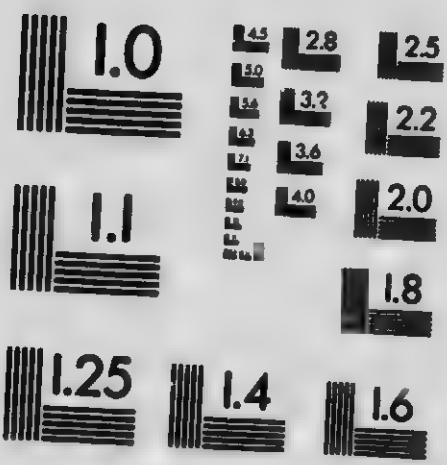






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WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
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The PRINCIPLES of POLITICAL ECONOMY & TAXATION BY DAVID RICARDO



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RICARDO, D

First Issue of this Edition . 1912
Reprinted 1917

INTRODUCTION

THE immense mass of economic literature presents no phenomenon at all comparable to the treatise here reprinted. One might even venture to doubt whether any of the numerous sociological sciences could discover a parallel. This was a work in many respects far from original, an outcome of much friendly discussion and private mental concentration, which its author published only with the greatest reluctance and misgiving. The reader of that day probably found it hard, remote, unimaginative; its style repellent, its treatment unsystematic, its method abstract and passionless. Yet even in this clothing its strange mixture of audacity and diffidence, of independence and selflessness, has achieved, whether by attraction or repulsion, a not easily estimable influence on human thought and feeling and action.

David Ricardo, the third son of a Dutch Jew who had settled in England and acquired a respectable fortune on the Stock Exchange, was born in 1772, on the eve of the industrial revolution, and four years before Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations*. His father, who seems to have been a man conventional in opinion, honourable in business, influential among his friends, introduced him to even the confidential work of finance at the early age of fourteen. In the world outside, England, whose national debt had just been doubled in a war of eight years' duration, was enjoying a brief respite from her long duel with France. Pitt's thaumaturgic sinking fund had come into baleful operation. Home-grown corn, in spite of much encouragement, had by now become inadequate for home needs. Steam had just been harnessed to the service of man. The country-side was rapidly emptying its population to feed the towns, and the north of England was already usurping the industrial supremacy of the south. In Berkshire and elsewhere the fond or lazy benevolence of the justices was creating a problem which Combination Laws and Bastardy Acts, war and protection, were to develop to frightful proportions, until the sore should need the knife. England was

at the beginning of a period during which her population was to endure such appalling misery as in our own happier—though far from perfect—day can hardly be conceived.

After more than one exhibition of intellectual independence David Ricardo seceded from the Jewish faith, and this apostasy meant separation from his father. A little later, at the age of twenty-one, he married a Miss Wilkinson. Their married life was unbrokenly happy. These changes made it necessary for him to secure his career and his position, and it says much for his character and capacity that other and older members of the Stock Exchange voluntarily aided him to this end. Their help, and his own unusual gifts of judgment and concentration, realised for him in a remarkably short time a considerable fortune, and this in an occupation dominated—in his own opinion advantageously dominated—by competition. Long before he was thirty years of age his position was secure enough to allow the indulgence on a generous scale of his scientific and literary tastes, though these were apparently not deep-rooted.

It was in 1799 that an accidental perusal of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* definitely drew his attention to the economic inquiries which were to absorb increasingly more of his time. But ten years of studentship, desultory at first, sedulous later, preceded the performance of his first piece of work. The tract entitled "The High Price of Bullion" grew out of certain letters which Ricardo was, with no slight difficulty, persuaded to publish in the *Morning Chronicle*, and though it was written in the early dawn of economic study it is singularly clear and acute, and in many respects still authoritative. Its influence was immediate, and the controversy with Mr. Bosanquet which followed, and in which Ricardo tore to shreds his opponent's flimsy arguments, only served, in the words of a contemporary, "to illustrate the abilities of the writer who stepped forward to vindicate the truth."

Publicity brought to Ricardo some friendships of high importance. Chief among them were those with James Mill, Thomas Malthus, and Jeremy Bentham, each of whom exercised a very definite influence on his intellectual development. It is not improbable that to them is due the fact that Ricardo ever published at all the results of his inquiry and thought.

The *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* was

published in 1817, by which date Ricardo stood confessedly at the head of economic science in England. The rest of his life, apart from scientific activity, need not concern us in detail. He was now an extensive landed proprietor in Gloucestershire, and in 1819 bought a seat in Parliament. He was neither a frequent nor a fluent speaker—we read that on one occasion early in his Parliamentary life he did not rise till he was loudly called on from all sides—but the House of Commons gave due respect to the authority with which his words were obviously invested. It is interesting to note that though not a Whig he was sufficiently honest and independent in view to vote almost uniformly against the government. He favoured the cause of Parliamentary Reform, was strongly sympathetic to the ballot, and "did good work in arguing for a Poor Law which should aim at its own extinction, in examining the schemes of Robert Owen, in advocating benefit clubs with old age pensions, in seconding Huskisson's and Hume's reforms, and in cross-examining witnesses before the committee on Agricultural Depression."

In 1823 illness compelled his retirement from Parliament, though it was not allowed to prevent his private work. But only a few months of life remained to him. His last days were full of alternating pain and stupor, and he died, at the age of fifty-one, in September 1823.

The explicit and affectionate judgment of contemporaries on his character is sufficiently borne out by other evidence. He was a good husband and father, a man kindly, modest, and unassuming, without artifice or pretension, in discussion more ready to listen than to speak, frank in acknowledging error and in admitting conviction, and at the same time quietly cogent and compelling in the advance and illustration of his own conclusions.

We know then that Ricardo lived a comparatively quiet and uneventful life in a period which, regarded from any and every human point of view, was of boundless significance, in which, particularly, economic England lay writhing in the crucible, her obstinate viscous past seething under the heat and blast of fierce titanic forces of change. We know that while the immediate environment of Ricardo's life embraced circumstances in which, if ever, competition was almost perfectly and perhaps beneficially realised, its remoter environment had in it much that could explain and condone any

apparent harshness in the results of economic analysis. We know, too, that the Ricardian analysis itself, which suffered from almost every possible vice of style and defect of presentation, excited passions at once the most profound and the most diverse. No period in man's history is so exacting or so interesting as that in which Ricardo lived, and the deeper our acquaintance with it the more sympathetic becomes our appreciation of Ricardo himself. "*Sciat se non parum profecisse cui Ricardo valde placebit*" is a verdict in which what there is of exaggeration is pardonable.

In the early years of the nineteenth century men breathed the air of deduction. Science was the bodiless creation of logic. Starting from one or two simple propositions, reason proceeded to deduce cogently and inevitably therefrom a whole system of laws, relations, and consequences. Given that the method was sound, and its employment faultless, the only source of error must obviously lie in the first elements, the *principia*, whence reason hatched her brood. This was the plan on which Bentham, Austin, and Mill the elder did their work, the mode which Ricardo adopted. It is the efficient explanation of their not infrequent deviation from the data of our experience or knowledge. For a deductive economic science, one has but to assume the existence of the earth, and the energising of all those faculties and capacities in man which spell or subserve acquisitiveness, thinking away every source of interference with their free play. Ricardo made these assumptions. His maimed halt utterance could not smother the relentless, close, invulnerable logic of his method. It was less likely then than now that his assumptions should be subjected to scrutiny. Further, the order which he made to reign where all had long been chaos, the system which he offered in explanation of an unwieldy toppling mass of details, simply stole by its audacious clarity the admiration and the conversion of his contemporaries.

One need not be acquainted with economic history or theory to argue from simple propositions, founded in experience or sentiment, a case against Ricardo. From one or two data concerning the nature of man one could reasonably produce, deductively, not indeed a system but at any rate a series of conclusions hostile to his results. But these would possess no high value owing to their very lack of system. It is more than probable that the foundation of economic science in

such a period demanded at least one great experiment in systematic deduction. Else no plan had been laid down. Yet this contention is not meant to raise Ricardo above criticism. One at least of his assumptions—man covetous—was by far too simple. Man from the economic point of view is unstable, allotropic: those faculties which subserve unbridled acquisitiveness, if indeed it ever exists, are differently developed in different men; acquisitiveness itself operates in more spheres than that of wealth only; the very success of acquisitiveness is apt to destroy for the majority the capacity and the opportunity of free competition. These and many other objections might be raised, were actually raised, against the Ricardian analysis. They are just objections, and of their justice Ricardo was not unaware. He knew that his view was mechanical, that he imperfectly realised certain features and facts of which consideration can never lightly be omitted in economic study. He would have been the first, had he lived, to object to the harsh use made of his conclusions, the first to deplore that "a logical artifice" should become "the accepted picture of the real world."

It has too often been forgotten that Ricardo and his school wrote of a world of certain men in a certain condition, and that they were not completely ignorant of the fact, though their realisation of it was less explicit than that of Bagehot and Cairnes in later time. That their conclusions were prostituted to base uses is admitted, but that Ricardo himself as a single person should have had attributed to him the whole and sole responsibility of words and works of which his period, his experience, his followers, prejudiced or blind or both, must bear the burden, is an injustice compact of harshness and ignorance. Induction reaches its generalisations or laws by correlating and classifying facts. It gives us, with equal truth and reasonableness, grounds for dissent from Ricardo's views, but it must always be remembered that under ascertainable intellectual influences, and with confessed limitations of outlook, he sought in all doggedness and sincerity to follow truth whithersoever it might lead him. A deductive economic law may be inhuman, but it seems scientific and simple: an inductive generalisation may be safe, but it is vague and misty and complex. The former is too clear-cut, the latter too ill-defined. Each defect admits of explanation, and for each allowance can be made. But rarely if ever is it given to one

man fully to correct the faults of one method by recourse to the excellencies of the other.

Ricardo's sincerity and cogency are in truth the best explanation of his immediate and protracted dominion over men's thoughts. Only when one tries to trace the ramifications of his influence does one fully realise its enormous extent. To say that it was supreme till 1848, when J. S. Mill's *Political Economy* was published or, more generally, that Ricardo became at once "a prop and a menace to the middle classes," is perhaps less than the truth. He favoured the removal of industrial and commercial restrictions. He moved Joseph Hume in 1824 to urge the repeal of the laws against combinations of labour. The Truck Acts he ridiculed. The Factory Acts he opposed. His theory seems to be an everlasting justification of the *status quo*. As such, at least, it was used. But the socialists, adopting his theories of value and wages, interpreted Ricardo's crude expressions to their own advantage. To alter the Ricardian conclusions, they said, alter the social conditions on which they depend: to improve on a subsistence wage, deprive capital of what it steals from labour—the value which labour creates. The land-taxers similarly used the Ricardian theory of rent: rent is a surplus for the existence of which no single individual is responsible—take it therefore for the benefit of all, whose presence creates it.

These examples are the merest froth on the waves of the Ricardian tide. Jevons said, "Ricardo gave the whole course of English economics a wrong twist." Mr. Foxwell adds, "it became unhistorical, unrealistic . . . the tool of a political party." It was rather the tool-chest of several political parties, the raw material whence many different twists were spun. Thomson and Hodgskin, Marx and Lassalle, Henry George and perhaps even the Owenites, owe more or less, directly or indirectly, to Ricardo. A harsh conservatism and a perhaps harsher *laissez-faire*; a constitutional meliorism and a revolutionary anarchism—these all find their source in Ricardo. McCulloch, Senior, and Mill, aware of his limitations, yet not comparing his assumptions with facts, built on his foundations.

For all this, it is wrong to attribute such consequences to "an elementary error in method." There are two methods, neither perfect, each needing the other's aid, the one overwhelming us with experiential details, the other blinding us

to them. Best is it to know the logic and the conclusions of both.

The nineteenth century shows to the student economic theories and the world of facts acting and interacting, each on each, and on the whole coming nearer in the process. Theories must and do influence men, and men theories. If Ricardo overworked deduction, he was the victim of an intellectual fashion which had its uses, performed its task, and made operative alike in theory and in practice the means of its own overthrow. If it be, mediately or immediately, Ricardo's shame to have justified many forms of misery, it is no less Ricardo's glory to have suggested many paths of escape.

F. W. KOLTHAMMER.

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ORIGINAL PREFACE

THE produce of the earth—all that is derived from its surface by the united application of labour, machinery, and capital, is divided among three classes of the community, namely, the proprietor of the land, the owner of the stock or capital necessary for its cultivation, and the labourers by whose industry it is cultivated.

But in different stages of society, the proportions of the whole produce of the earth which will be allotted to each of these classes, under the names of rent, profit, and wages, will be essentially different; depending mainly on the actual fertility of the soil, on the accumulation of capital and population, and on the skill, ingenuity, and instruments employed in agriculture.

To determine the laws which regulate this distribution is the principal problem in Political Economy: much as the science has been improved by the writings of Turgot, Stuart, Smith, Say, Sismondi, and others, they afford very little satisfactory information respecting the natural course of rent, profit, and wages.

In 1815, Mr. Malthus, in his *Inquiry into the Nature and Progress of Rent*, and a Fellow of University College, Oxford, in his *Essay on the Application of Capital to Land*, presented to the world, nearly at the same moment, the true doctrine of rent; without a knowledge of which it is impossible to understand the effect of the progress of wealth on profits and wages, or to trace satisfactorily the influence of taxation on different classes of the community; particularly when the commodities taxed are the productions immediately derived from the surface of the earth. Adam Smith, and the other able writers to whom I have alluded, not having viewed correctly the principles of rent, have, it appears to me, overlooked many important truths, which can only be discovered after the subject of rent is thoroughly understood.

To supply this deficiency, abilities are required of a far superior cast to any possessed by the writer of the following pages; yet, after having given to this subject his best considera-

tion—after the aid which he has derived from the works of the above-mentioned eminent writers—and after the valuable experience which a few late years, abounding in facts, have yielded to the present generation—it will not, he trusts, be deemed presumptuous in him to state his opinions on the laws of profits and wages, and on the operation of taxes. If the principles which he deems correct should be found to be so, it will be for others, more able than himself, to trace them to all their important consequences.

The writer, in combating received opinions, has found it necessary to advert more particularly to those passages in the writings of Adam Smith from which he sees reason to differ; but he hopes it will not, on that account, be suspected that he does not, in common with all those who acknowledge the importance of the science of Political Economy, participate in the admiration which the profound work of this celebrated author so justly excites.

The same remark may be applied to the excellent works of M. Say, who not only was the first, or among the first, of continental writers who justly appreciated and applied the principles of Smith, and who has done more than all other continental writers taken together to recommend the principles of that enlightened and beneficial system to the nations of Europe; but who has succeeded in placing the science in a more logical and more instructive order; and has enriched it by several discussions, original, accurate, and profound.[1] The respect, however, which the author entertains for the writings of this gentleman has not prevented him from commenting with that freedom which he thinks the interests of science require, on such passages of the *Economie Politique* as appeared at variance with his own ideas.

[1] Chap. xv. Part i., *Des Débouchés*, contains, in particular, some very important principles, which I believe were first explained by this distinguished writer.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD EDITION

In this edition I have endeavoured to explain more fully than in the last my opinion on the difficult subject of Value, and for that purpose have made a few additions to the first chapter. I have also inserted a new chapter on the subject of Machinery, and on the effects of its improvement on the interests of the different classes of the state. In the chapter on the Distinctive Properties of Value and Riches, I have examined the doctrines of M. Say on that important question, as amended in the fourth and last edition of his work. I have in the last chapter endeavoured to place in a stronger point of view than before the doctrine of the ability of a country to pay additional money taxes, although the aggregate money value of the mass of its commodities should fall, in consequence either of the diminished quantity of labour required to produce its corn at home, by improvements in its husbandry, or from its obtaining a part of its corn at a cheaper price from abroad, by means of the exportation of its manufactured commodities. This consideration is of great importance, as it regards the question of the policy of leaving unrestricted the importation of foreign corn, particularly in a country burthened with a heavy fixed money taxation, the consequence of an immense National Debt. I have endeavoured to show that the ability to pay taxes depends, not on the gross money value of the mass of commodities, nor on the net money value of the revenues of capitalists and landlords, but on the money value of each man's revenue compared to the money value of the commodities which he usually consumes.

March 26, 1821.

PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY

CHAPTER I

ON VALUE

SECTION I

The value of a commodity, or the quantity of any other commodity for which it will exchange, depends on the relative quantity of labour which is necessary for its production, and not on the greater or less compensation which is paid for that labour

It has been observed by Adam Smith that "the word Value has two different meanings, and sometimes expresses the utility of some particular object, and sometimes the power of purchasing other goods which the possession of that object conveys. The one may be called *value in use*; the other *value in exchange*. The things," he continues, "which have the greatest value in use, have frequently little or no value in exchange; and, on the contrary, those which have the greatest value in exchange, have little or no value in use." Water and air are abundantly useful; they are indeed indispensable to existence, yet, under ordinary circumstances, nothing can be obtained in exchange for them. Gold, on the contrary, though of little use compared with air or water, will exchange for a great quantity of other goods.

Utility then is not the measure of exchangeable value, although it is absolutely essential to it. If a commodity were in no way useful—in other words, if it could in no way contribute to our gratification—it would be destitute of exchangeable value, however scarce it might be, or whatever quantity of labour might be necessary to procure it.

Possessing utility, commodities derive their exchangeable value from two sources: from their scarcity, and from the quantity of labour required to obtain them.

There are some commodities, the value of which is determined by their scarcity alone. No labour can increase the quantity of such goods, and therefore their value cannot be lowered by an increased supply. Some rare statues and pictures, scarce books and coins, wines of a peculiar quality, which can be made only from grapes grown on a particular soil, of which there is a very limited quantity, are all of this description. Their value is wholly independent of the quantity of labour originally necessary to produce them, and varies with the varying wealth and inclinations of those who are desirous to possess them.

These commodities, however, form a very small part of the mass of commodities daily exchanged in the market. By far the greatest part of those goods which are the objects of desire are procured by labour; and they may be multiplied, not in one country alone, but in many, almost without any assignable limit, if we are disposed to bestow the labour necessary to obtain them.

In speaking, then, of commodities, of their exchangeable value, and of the laws which regulate their relative prices, we mean always such commodities only as can be increased in quantity by the exertion of human industry, and on the production of which competition operates without restraint.

In the early stages of society, the exchangeable value of these commodities, or the rule which determines how much of one shall be given in exchange for another, depends almost exclusively on the comparative quantity of labour expended on each.

"The real price of everything," says Adam Smith, "what everything really costs to the man who wants to acquire it, is the toil and trouble of acquiring it. What everything is really worth to the man who has acquired it, and who wants to dispose of it, or exchange it for something else, is the toil and trouble which it can save to himself, and which it can impose upon other people." "Labour was the first price—the original purchase-money that was paid for all things." Again, "in that early and rude state of society which precedes both the accumulation of stock and the appropriation of land, the proportion between the quantities of labour necessary for acquiring different objects seems to be the only circumstance which can afford any rule for exchanging them for one another. If, among a nation of hunters, for example, it usually cost twice the labour to kill a beaver which it does to kill a deer, one beaver should naturally exchange for, or be worth, two deer. It is natural that what is usually the produce of two days' or two hours' labour should be worth

double of what is usually the produce of one day's or one hour's labour." [1]

That this is really the foundation of the exchangeable value of all things, excepting those which cannot be increased by human industry, is a doctrine of the utmost importance in political economy; for from no source do so many errors, and so much difference of opinion in that science proceed, as from the vague ideas which are attached to the word value.

If the quantity of labour realised in commodities regulate their exchangeable value, every increase of the quantity of labour must augment the value of that commodity on which it is exercised, as every diminution must lower it.

Adam Smith, who so accurately defined the original source of exchangeable value, and who was bound in consistency to maintain that all things became more or less valuable in proportion as more or less labour was bestowed on their production, has himself erected another standard measure of value, and speaks of things being more or less valuable in proportion as they will exchange for more or less of this standard measure. Sometimes he speaks of corn, at other times of labour, as a standard measure; not the quantity of labour bestowed on the production of any object, but the quantity which it can command in the market: as if these were two equivalent expressions, and as if, because a man's labour had become doubly efficient, and he could therefore produce twice the quantity of a commodity, he would necessarily receive twice the former quantity in exchange for it.

If this indeed were true, if the reward of the labourer were always in proportion to what he produced, the quantity of labour bestowed on a commodity, and the quantity of labour which that commodity would purchase, would be equal, and either might accurately measure the variations of other things; but they are not equal; the first is under many circumstances an invariable standard, indicating correctly the variations of other things; the latter is subject to as many fluctuations as the commodities compared with it. Adam Smith, after most ably showing the insufficiency of a variable medium, such as gold and silver, for the purpose of determining the varying value of other things, has himself, by fixing on corn or labour, chosen a medium no less variable.

Gold and silver are no doubt subject to fluctuations from the discovery of new and more abundant mines; but such discoveries are rare, and their effects, though powerful, are limited

[1] Book i. chap. 5.

to periods of comparatively short duration. They are subject also to fluctuation from improvements in the skill and machinery with which the mines may be worked; as in consequence of such improvements a greater quantity may be obtained with the same labour. They are further subject to fluctuation from the decreasing produce of the mines, after they have yielded a supply to the world for a succession of ages. But from which of these sources of fluctuation is corn exempted? Does not that also vary, on one hand, from improvements in agriculture, from improved machinery and implements used in husbandry, as well as from the discovery of new tracts of fertile land, which in other countries may be taken into cultivation, and which will affect the value of corn in every market where importation is free? Is it not on the other hand subject to be enhanced in value from prohibitions of importation, from increasing population and wealth, and the greater difficulty of obtaining the increased supplies, on account of the additional quantity of labour which the cultivation of inferior land requires? Is not the value of labour equally variable; being not only affected, as all other things are, by the proportion between the supply and demand, which uniformly varies with every change in the condition of the community, but also by the varying price of food and other necessaries, on which the wages of labour are expended?

In the same country double the quantity of labour may be required to produce a given quantity of food and necessaries at one time that may be necessary at another and a distant time; yet the labourer's reward may possibly be very little diminished. If the labourer's wages at the former period were a certain quantity of food and necessaries, he probably could not have subsisted if that quantity had been reduced. Food and necessaries in this case will have risen 100 per cent. if estimated by the *quantity* of labour necessary to their production, while they will scarcely have increased in value if measured by the quantity of labour for which they will *exchange*.

The same remark may be made respecting two or more countries. In America and Poland, on the land last taken into cultivation, a year's labour of any given number of men will produce much more corn than on land similarly circumstanced in England. *Now*, supposing all other necessaries to be equally cheap in those three countries, would it not be a great mistake to conclude that the quantity of corn awarded to the labourer would in each country be in proportion to the facility of production?

If the shoes and clothing of the labourer could, by improvements in machinery, be produced by one-fourth of the labour now necessary to their production, they would probably fall 75 per cent.; but so far is it from being true that the labourer would thereby be enabled permanently to consume four coats, or four pair of shoes, instead of one, that it is probable his wages would in no long time be adjusted by the effects of competition, and the stimulus to population, to the new value of the necessaries on which they were expended. If these improvements extended to all the objects of the labourer's consumption, we should find him probably, at the end of a very few years, in possession of only a small, if any, addition to his enjoyments, although the exchangeable value of those commodities, compared with any other commodity, in the manufacture of which no such improvement were made, had sustained a very considerable reduction; and though they were the produce of a very considerably diminished quantity of labour.

It cannot then be correct to say with Adam Smith, "that as labour may sometimes *purchase* a greater and sometimes a smaller quantity of goods, it is their value which varies, not that of the labour which purchases them;" and therefore, "that labour, *alone never varying in its own value*, is alone the ultimate and real standard by which the value of all commodities can at all times and places be estimated and compared;" —but it is correct to say, as Adam Smith had previously said, "that the proportion between the quantities of labour necessary for acquiring different objects seems to be the only circumstance which can afford any rule for exchanging them for one another;" or in other words that it is the comparative quantity of commodities which labour will produce that determines their present or past relative value, and not the comparative quantities of commodities which are given to the labourer in exchange for his labour.

Two commodities vary in relative value, and we wish to know in which the variation has really taken place. If we compare the present value of one with shoes, stockings, hats, iron, sugar, and all other commodities, we find that it will exchange for precisely the same quantity of all these things as before. If we compare the other with the same commodities, we find it has varied with respect to them all: we may then with great probability infer that the variation has been in this commodity, and not in the commodities with which we have compared it. If on examining still more particularly into all the circumstances

connected with the production of these various commodities, we find that precisely the same quantity of labour and capital are necessary to the production of the shoes, stockings, hats, iron, sugar, etc.; but that the same quantity as before is not necessary to produce the single commodity whose relative value is altered, probability is changed into certainty, and we are sure that the variation is in the single commodity: we then discover also the cause of its variation.

If I found that an ounce of gold would exchange for a less quantity of all the commodities above enumerated and many others; and if, moreover, I found that by the discovery of a new and more fertile mine, or by the employment of machinery to great advantage, a given quantity of gold could be obtained with a less quantity of labour, I should be justified in saying that the cause of the alteration in the value of gold relatively to other commodities was the greater facility of its production, or the smaller quantity of labour necessary to obtain it. In like manner, if labour fell very considerably in value, relatively to all other things, and if I found that its fall was in consequence of an abundant supply, encouraged by the great facility with which corn, and the other necessaries of the labourer, were produced, it would, I apprehend, be correct for me to say that corn and necessaries had fallen in value in consequence of less quantity of labour being necessary to produce them, and that this facility of providing for the support of the labourer had been followed by a fall in the value of labour. No, say Adam Smith and Mr. Malthus, in the case of the gold you were correct in calling its variation a fall of its value, because corn and labour had not then varied; and as gold would command a less quantity of them, as well as of all other things, than before, it was correct to say that all things had remained stationary and that gold only had varied; but when corn and labour fall, things which we have selected to be our standard measure of value, notwithstanding all the variations to which we acknowledge they are subject, it would be highly improper to say so; the correct language will be to say that corn and labour have remained stationary, and all other things have risen in value.

Now it is against this language that I protest. I find that precisely, as in the case of the gold, the cause of the variation between corn and other things is the smaller quantity of labour necessary to produce it, and therefore, by all just reasoning, I am bound to call the variation of corn and labour a fall in their value, and not a rise in the value of the things with which they

are compared. If I have to hire a labourer for a week, and instead of ten shillings I pay him eight, no variation having taken place in the value of money, the labourer can probably obtain more food and necessaries with his eight shillings than he before obtained for ten: but this is owing, not to a rise in the real value of his wages, as stated by Adam Smith, and more recently by Mr. Malthus, but to a fall in the value of the things on which his wages are expended, things perfectly distinct; and yet for calling this a fall in the real value of wages, I am told that I adopt new and unusual language, not reconcilable with the true principles of the science. To me it appears that the unusual and, indeed, inconsistent language is that used by my opponents.

Suppose a labourer to be paid a bushel of corn for a week's work when the price of corn is 80*s.* per quarter, and that he is paid a bushel and a quarter when the price falls to 40*s.* Suppose, too, that he consumes half a bushel of corn a week in his own family, and exchanges the remainder for other things, such as fuel, soap, candles, tea, sugar, salt, etc. etc.; if the three-fourths of a bushel which will remain to him, in one case, cannot procure him as much of the above commodities as half a bushel did in the other, which it will not, will labour have risen or fallen in value? Risen, Adam Smith must say, because his standard is corn, and the labourer receives more corn for a week's labour. Fallen, must the same Adam Smith say, "because the value of a thing depends on the power of purchasing other goods which the possession of that object conveys," and labour has a less power of purchasing such other goods.

SECTION II

Labour of different qualities differently rewarded. This no cause of variation in the relative value of commodities

In speaking, however, of labour, as being the foundation of all value, and the relative quantity of labour as almost exclusively determining the relative value of commodities, I must not be supposed to be inattentive to the different qualities of labour, and the difficulty of comparing an hour's or a day's labour in one employment with the same duration of labour in another. The estimation in which different qualities of labour are held comes soon to be adjusted in the market with sufficient precision for all practical purposes, and depends much on the comparative skill of the labourer and intensity of the labour

performed. The scale, when once formed, is liable to little variation. If a day's labour of a working jeweller be more valuable than a day's labour of a common labourer, it has long ago been adjusted and placed in its proper position in the scale of value.[1]

In comparing, therefore, the value of the same commodity at different periods of time, the consideration of the comparative skill and intensity of labour required for that particular commodity needs scarcely to be attended to, as it operates equally at both periods. One description of labour at one time is compared with the same description of labour at another; if a tenth, a fifth, or a fourth has been added or taken away, an effect proportioned to the cause will be produced on the relative value of the commodity.

If a piece of cloth be now of the value of two pieces of linen, and if, in ten years hence, the ordinary value of a piece of cloth should be four pieces of linen, we may safely conclude that either more labour is required to make the cloth, or less to make the linen, or that both causes have operated.

As the inquiry to which I wish to draw the reader's attention relates to the effect of the variations in the relative value of commodities, and not in their absolute value, it will be of little importance to examine into the comparative degree of estimation in which the different kinds of human labour are held. We may fairly conclude that whatever inequality there might originally have been in them, whatever the ingenuity, skill, or time necessary for the acquirement of one species of manual dexterity more than another, it continues nearly the same from one generation to another; or at least that the variation is very inconsiderable from year to year, and therefore can

[1] "But though labour be the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities, it is not that by which their value is commonly estimated. It is often difficult to ascertain the proportion between two different quantities of labour. The time spent in two different sorts of work will not always alone determine this proportion. The different degrees of hardship endured, and of ingenuity exercised, must likewise be taken into account. There may be more labour in an hour's hard work than in two hours' easy business; or in an hour's application to a trade, which it costs ten years' labour to learn, than in a month's industry at an ordinary and obvious employment. But it is not easy to find any accurate measure, either of hardship or ingenuity. In exchanging, indeed, the different productions of different sorts of labour for one another, some allowance is commonly made for both. It is adjusted, however, not by any accurate measure, but by the higgling and bargaining of the market, according to that sort of rough equality which, though not exact, is sufficient for carrying on the business of common life."—*Wealth of Nations*, book i. chap. 10.

have little effect, for short periods, on the relative value of commodities.

"The proportion between the different rates both of wages and profit in the different employments of labour and stock seems not to be much affected, as has already been observed, by the riches or poverty, the advancing, stationary, or declining state of the society. Such revolutions in the public welfare, though they affect the general rates both of wages and profit, must in the end affect them equally in all different employments. The proportion between them therefore must remain the same, and cannot well be altered, at least for any considerable time, by any such revolutions." [1]

SECTION III

Not only the labour applied immediately to commodities affect their value, but the labour also which is bestowed on the implements, tools, and buildings, with which such labour is assisted

EVEN in that early state to which Adam Smith refers, some capital, though possibly made and accumulated by the hunter himself, would be necessary to enable him to kill his game. Without some weapon, neither the beaver nor the deer could be destroyed, and therefore the value of these animals would be regulated, not solely by the time and labour necessary to their destruction, but also by the time and labour necessary for providing the hunter's capital, the weapon, by the aid of which their destruction was effected.

Suppose the weapon necessary to kill the beaver was constructed with much more labour than that necessary to kill the deer, on account of the greater difficulty of approaching near to the former animal, and the consequent necessity of its being more true to its mark; one beaver would naturally be of more value than two deer, and precisely for this reason, that more labour would, on the whole, be necessary to its destruction. Or suppose that the same quantity of labour was necessary to make both weapons, but that they were of very unequal durability; of the durable implement only a small portion of its value would be transferred to the commodity, a much greater portion of the value of the less durable implement would be realised in the commodity which it contributed to produce.

All the implements necessary to kill the beaver and deer might belong to one class of men, and the labour employed in

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, book i. chap. 10.

their destruction might be furnished by another class; still, their comparative prices would be in proportion to the actual labour bestowed, both on the formation of the capital and on the destruction of the animals. Under different circumstances of plenty or scarcity of capital, as compared with labour, under different circumstances of plenty or scarcity of the food and necessaries essential to the support of men, those who furnished an equal value of capital for either one employment or for the other might have a half, a fourth, or an eighth of the produce obtained, the remainder being paid as wages to those who furnished the labour; yet this division could not affect the relative value of these commodities, since whether the profits of capital were greater or less, whether they were 50, 20, or 10 per cent., or whether the wages of labour were high or low, they would operate equally on both employments.

If we suppose the occupations of the society extended, that some provide canoes and tackle necessary for fishing, others the seed and rude machinery first used in agriculture, still the same principle would hold true, that the exchangeable value of the commodities produced would be in proportion to the labour bestowed on their production; not on their immediate production only, but on all those implements or machines required to give effect to the particular labour to which they were applied.

If we look to a state of society in which greater improvements have been made, and in which arts and commerce flourish, we shall still find that commodities vary in value conformably with this principle: in estimating the exchangeable value of stockings, for example, we shall find that their value, comparatively with other things, depends on the total quantity of labour necessary to manufacture them and bring them to market. First, there is the labour necessary to cultivate the land on which the raw cotton is grown; secondly, the labour of conveying the cotton to the country where the stockings are to be manufactured, which includes a portion of the labour bestowed in building the ship in which it is conveyed, and which is charged in the freight of the goods; thirdly, the labour of the spinner and weaver; fourthly, a portion of the labour of the engineer, smith, and carpenter, who erected the buildings and machinery, by the help of which they are made; fifthly, the labour of the retail dealer, and of many others, whom it is unnecessary further to particularise. The aggregate sum of these various kinds of labour determines the quantity of other things for which these stockings will exchange, while the same

consideration of the various quantities of labour which have been bestowed on those other things will equally govern the portion of them which will be given for the stockings.

To convince ourselves that this is the real foundation of exchangeable value, let us suppose any improvement to be made in the means of abridging labour in any one of the various processes through which the raw cotton must pass before the manufactured stockings come to the market to be exchanged for other things, and observe the effects which will follow. If fewer men were required to cultivate the raw cotton, or if fewer sailors were employed in navigating, or shipwrights in constructing the ship, in which it was conveyed to us; if fewer hands were employed in raising the buildings and machinery, or if these, when raised, were rendered more efficient, the stockings would inevitably fall in value, and consequently command less of other things. They would fall, because a less quantity of labour was necessary to their production, and would therefore exchange for a smaller quantity of those things in which no such abridgment of labour had been made.

Economy in the use of labour never fails to reduce the relative value of a commodity, whether the saving be in the labour necessary to the manufacture of the commodity itself, or in that necessary to the formation of the capital by the aid of which it is produced. In either case the price of stockings would fall, whether there were fewer men employed as bleachers, spinners, and weavers, persons immediately necessary to their manufacture; or as sailors, carriers, engineers, and smiths, persons more indirectly concerned. In the one case, the whole saving of labour would fall on the stockings, because that portion of labour was wholly confined to the stockings; in the other, a portion only would fall on the stockings, the remainder being applied to all those other commodities, to the production of which the buildings, machinery, and carriage were subservient.

Suppose that, in the early stages of society, the bows and arrows of the hunter were of equal value, and of equal durability, with the canoe and implements of the fisherman, both being the produce of the same quantity of labour. Under such circumstances the value of the deer, the produce of the hunter's day's labour, would be exactly equal to the value of the fish, the produce of the fisherman's day's labour. The comparative value of the fish and the game would be entirely regulated by the quantity of labour realised in each, whatever might be the quantity of production or however high or low general wages

or profits might be. If, for example, the canoes and implements of the fisherman were of the value of £100, and were calculated to last for ten years, and he employed ten men, whose annual labour cost £100, and who in one day obtained by their labour twenty salmon: If the weapons employed by the hunter were also of £100 value, and calculated to last ten years, and if he also employed ten men, whose annual labour cost £100, and who in one day procured him ten deer; then the natural price of a deer would be two salmon, whether the proportion of the whole produce bestowed on the men who obtained it were large or small. The proportion which might be paid for wages is of the utmost importance in the question of profits; for it must at once be seen that profits would be high or low exactly in proportion as wages were low or high; but it could not in the least affect the relative value of fish and game, as wages would be high or low at the same time in both occupations. If the hunter urged the plea of his paying a large proportion, or the value of a large proportion of his game for wages, as an inducement to the fisherman to give him more fish in exchange for his game, the latter would state that he was equally affected by the same cause; and therefore, under all variations of wages and profits, under all the effects of accumulation of capital, as long as they continued by a day's labour to obtain respectively the same quantity of fish and the same quantity of game, the natural rate of exchange would be one deer for two salmon.

If with the same quantity of labour a less quantity of fish or a greater quantity of game were obtained, the value of fish would rise in comparison with that of game. If, on the contrary, with the same quantity of labour a less quantity of game or a greater quantity of fish was obtained, game would rise in comparison with fish.

If there were any other commodity which was invariable in its value, we should be able to ascertain, by comparing the value of fish and game with this commodity, how much of the variation was to be attributed to a cause which affected the value of fish, and how much to a cause which affected the value of game.

Suppose money to be that commodity. If a salmon were worth £1 and a deer £2, one deer would be worth two salmon. But a deer might become of the value of three salmon, for more labour might be required to obtain the deer, or less to get the salmon, or both these causes might operate at the same time. If we had this invariable standard, we might easily ascertain in what degree either of these causes operated. If salmon

continued to sell for £1 whilst deer rose to £3, we might conclude that more labour was required to obtain the deer. If deer continued at the same price of £2 and salmon sold for 13s. 4d., we might then be sure that less labour was required to obtain the salmon; and if deer rose to £2 10s. and salmon fell to 16s. 8d., we should be convinced that both causes had operated in producing the alteration of the relative value of these commodities.

No alteration in the wages of labour could produce any alteration in the relative value of these commodities; for suppose them to rise, no greater quantity of labour would be required in any of these occupations but it would be paid for at a higher price, and the same reasons which should make the hunter and fisherman endeavour to raise the value of their game and fish would cause the owner of the mine to raise the value of his gold. This inducement acting with the same force on all these three occupations, and the relative situation of those engaged in them being the same before and after the rise of wages, the relative value of game, fish, and gold would continue unaltered. Wages might rise twenty per cent., and profits consequently fall in a greater or less proportion, without occasioning the least alteration in the relative value of these commodities.

Now suppose that, with the same labour and fixed capital, more fish could be produced, but no more gold or game, the relative value of fish would fall in comparison with gold or game. If, instead of twenty salmon, twenty-five were the produce of one day's labour, the price of a salmon would be sixteen shillings instead of a pound, and two salmon and a half, instead of two salmon, would be given in exchange for one deer, but the price of deer would continue at £2 as before. In the same manner, if fewer fish could be obta ned with the same capital and labour, fish would rise in comparative value. Fish then would rise or fall in exchangeable value, only because more or less labour was required to obtain a given quantity; and it never could rise or fall beyond the proportion of the increased or diminished quantity of labour required.

If we had then an invariable standard, by which we could measure the variation in other commodities, we should find that the utmost limit to which they could permanently rise, if produced under the circumstances supposed, was proportioned to the additional quantity of labour required for their production; and that unless more labour were required for their production they could not rise in any degree whatever. A rise

of wages would not raise them in money value, nor relatively to any other commodities, the production of which required no additional quantity of labour, which employed the same proportion of fixed and circulating capital, and fixed capital of the same durability. If more or less labour were required in the production of the other commodity, we have already stated that this will immediately occasion an alteration in its relative value, but such alteration is owing to the altered quantity of requisite labour, and not to the rise of wages.

SECTION IV

The principle that the quantity of labour bestowed on the production of commodities regulates their relative value considerably modified by the employment of machinery and other fixed and durable capital

In the former section we have supposed the implements and weapons necessary to kill the deer and salmon to be equally durable, and to be the result of the same quantity of labour, and we have seen that the variations in the relative value of deer and salmon depended solely on the varying quantities of labour necessary to obtain them, but in every state of society, the tools, implements, buildings, and machinery employed in different trades may be of various degrees of durability, and may require different portions of labour to produce them. The proportions, too, in which the capital that is to support labour, and the capital that is invested in tools, machinery, and buildings, may be variously combined. This difference in the degree of durability of fixed capital, and this variety in the proportions in which the two sorts of capital may be combined, introduce another cause, besides the greater or less quantity of labour necessary to produce commodities, for the variations in their relative value—this cause is the rise or fall in the value of labour.

The food and clothing consumed by the labourer, the buildings in which he works, the implements with which his labour is assisted, are all of a perishable nature. There is, however, a vast difference in the time for which these different capitals will endure: a steam-engine will last longer than a ship, a ship than the clothing of the labourer, and the clothing of the labourer longer than the food which he consumes.

According as capital is rapidly perishable, and requires to be frequently reproduced, or is of slow consumption, it is classed

under the heads of circulating or of fixed capital.[1] A brewer whose buildings and machinery are valuable and durable is said to employ a large portion of fixed capital: on the contrary, a shoemaker, whose capital is chiefly employed in the payment of wages, which are expended on food and clothing, commodities more perishable than buildings and machinery, is said to employ a large proportion of his capital as circulating capital.

It is also to be observed that the circulating capital may circulate, or be returned to its employer, in very unequal times. The wheat bought by a farmer to sow is comparatively a fixed capital to the wheat purchased by a baker to make into loaves. One leaves it in the ground and can obtain no return for a year; the other can get it ground into flour, sell it as bread to his customers, and have his capital free to renew the same or commence any other employment in a week.

Two trades then may employ the same amount of capital; but it may be very differently divided with respect to the portion which is fixed and that which is circulating.

In one trade very little capital may be employed as circulating capital, that is to say, in the support of labour—it may be principally invested in machinery, implements, buildings, etc., capital of a comparatively fixed and durable character. In another trade the same amount of capital may be used, but it may be chiefly employed in the support of labour, and very little may be invested in implements, machines, and buildings. A rise in the wages of labour cannot fail to affect unequally commodities produced under such different circumstances.

Again, two manufacturers may employ the same amount of fixed and the same amount of circulating capital; but the durability of their fixed capitals may be very unequal. One may have steam-engines of the value of £10,000, the other, ships of the same value.

If men employed no machinery in production but labour only, and were all the same length of time before they brought their commodities to market, the exchangeable value of their goods would be precisely in proportion to the quantity of labour employed.

If they employed fixed capital of the same value and of the same durability, then, too, the value of the commodities produced would be the same, and they would vary with the greater or less quantity of labour employed on their production.

[1] A division not essential, and in which the line of demarcation cannot be accurately drawn.